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# Rural Development: How USDA Helps

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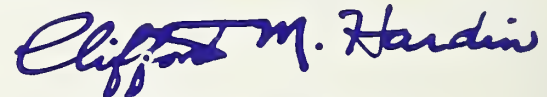
## FOREWORD

The purpose of rural development is to create job opportunities, community services, a better quality of living, and an improved social and physical environment in the small cities, towns, villages and farm communities in Rural America. It is hoped that the migration of people to the great metropolitan centers can not only be stemmed, but reversed.

Rural Development is not a new agency of government. Built on local initiative, it is a movement which encourages local citizens to identify their problems, their assets and their needs and then encourages them to develop action programs which would both improve the environment and expand the opportunities for productive employment.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture offers educational, organizational and financial assistance which may not be available locally. This booklet is intended to outline that assistance.

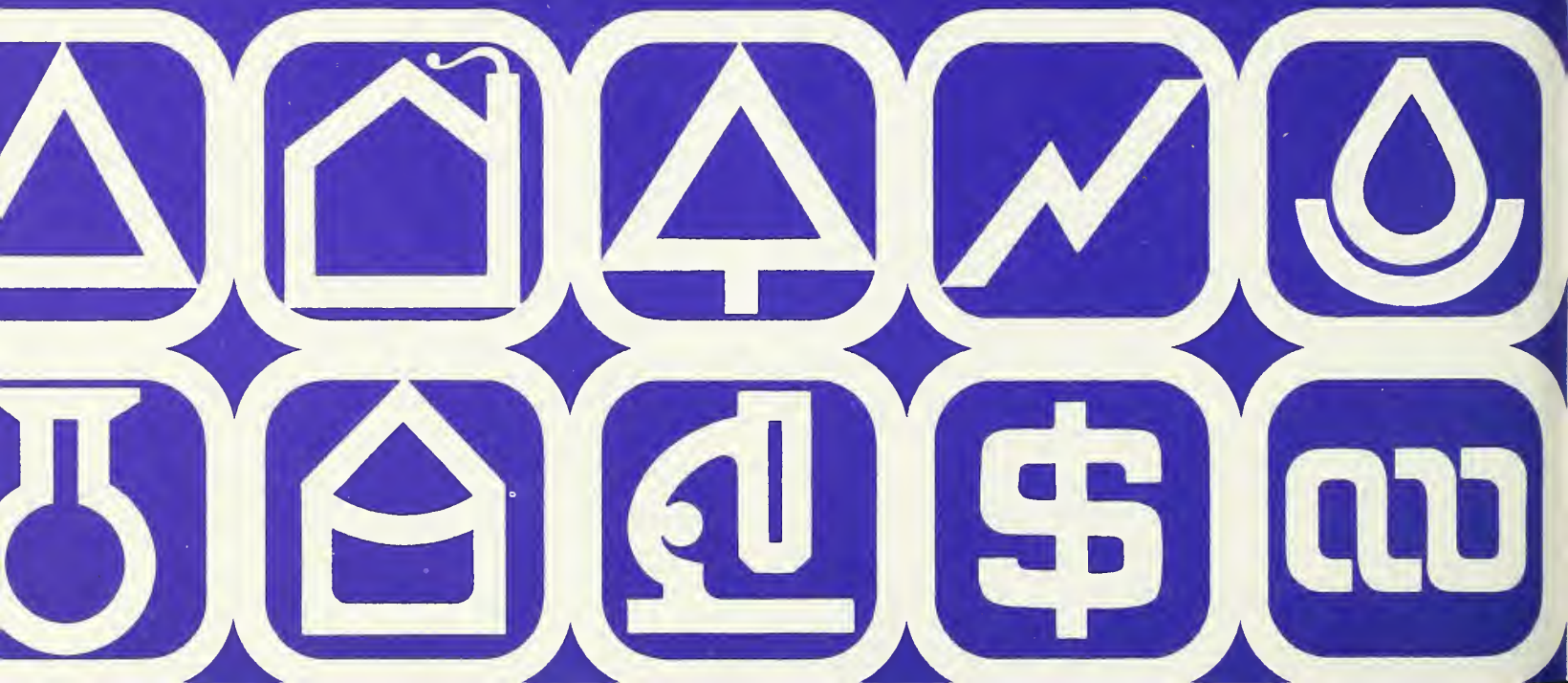
The agencies of this Department urge you to contact their local representatives for more information.



*Clifford M. Hardin*  
*Secretary of Agriculture*

SEE THESE PAGES to find which agencies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture offer the kind of assistance you need for rural development . . .

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## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

The Extension Service conducts educational programs to stimulate rural development activities. These are conducted for groups, individuals, and personnel of public and private agencies interested in developing the economic, social and cultural livability of their community.

These programs are designed to stimulate interest among local leaders and to develop understanding so that the principle of rural development may be effectively applied.

### Cooperative Extension:

- \* Conducts **educational programs** to help rural development leaders recognize opportunities, analyze problems, evaluate alternatives, set priorities, and organize to achieve goals.

- \* Trains leaders to learn about and use government and private **services and resources** for development.

- \* Assists other government agencies involved in planning and development activities.

- \* Makes available professionals from the land-grant universities to assist local groups.

- \* **Assists local groups** in evaluating progress toward locally identified goals and reporting this to the community.

# FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION



The Farmers Home Administration is USDA's rural credit agency, providing loans and grants to individuals, groups and communities to finance a broad spectrum of programs contributing to rural development.

More than \$1.6 billion was invested in rural America by the Farmers Home Administration in fiscal 1970. Except for a few million in grant funds, all of this will be repaid with interest. In 1971, more than \$2.1 billion is expected to be invested in the agency's programs.

Loans are made only to individuals and groups unable to obtain credit elsewhere, and only in communities of not larger than 5,500 population.

Highlights of the **Farmers Home** program are:

\* **Rural housing loans.** More than 61,500 families obtained new or improved housing last year as a record \$587.9 million was advanced, over 98 percent provided by private investors on an insured basis. Nearly 300,000 people are included in the families served.

\* **Water and waste disposal systems.** Almost four million rural residents have benefitted from installation of modern facilities in the countryside and small communities under this program. About 4,000 communities have participated in one or both of these loans.

\* **Economic opportunity loans.** These low-interest loans are made to low-income farmers and other rural citizens to improve the borrower's farming capability or to enable him to develop or expand a small business or service. Cooperatives serving low-income people also are eligible.

\* **Farmer program loans.** Farm ownership loans, to finance or refinance mortgages on property, and operating loans, to provide funds for feed, seed, fertilizer and other farm expenses, support the family farm concept.

\* **Emergency loans.** Emergency loans at low interest are made in designated disaster areas.

Other loan programs of the Farmers Home Administration include those to construct housing for farm laborers, to develop rural homebuilding sites and to build self-help housing units. Watershed improvement loans, including projects for flood control, soil conservation and recreation, also are available.

Farmers Home Administration provides counsel and technical advice on rural development projects through 1,700 county offices and 41 state offices serving America's 3,000 counties.



## FOREST SERVICE

Forest Service programs, all related to forest resources, have an important and direct effect on Rural Development.

The National Forest System contains 186 million acres of working lands which provide 25 percent of the timber processed by the wood-using industries, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in payrolls and work for thousands of people in rural communities.

The **Forest Service** provides:

- \* Training and work experience to help upgrade the skills of rural youth and adults through the Neighborhood Youth Corps, Work Study and Work Experience programs, Operation Mainstream, and Manpower and Training Act Programs.

- \* **Research** that contributes to new and expanded industries for rural communities.

- \* To **State Foresters** in all 50 States, programs that result in new industries, income and jobs.

- \* **Cooperation with other agencies** in resource management, planning, and economic development.

- \* **Economic and feasibility studies** and technical assistance, actively seeking out development opportunities for local communities.



## RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION

The primary role of the Rural Electrification Administration in rural development is to provide financial and technical assistance for the development of electric and telephone facilities in rural areas.

REA assists the more than 1,900 rural electric and telephone systems it finances in efforts that contribute to the growth and development of the areas they serve.

Participating with other local organizations **REA** borrowers:

- \* **Assist in** the organization of local corporations to develop and finance businesses and industries.
- \* **Develop brochures** and other materials describing area resources.
- \* **Survey** available labor supplies and sponsor man-power training programs.
- \* **Determine housing needs.**
- \* **Locate technical and financial assistance** for businesses and industry interested in expansion and new locations.
- \* **Contribute to the planning of recreational projects,** health facilities and housing and community facilities.

REA supports borrowers' efforts by cooperating with other groups on the national level in providing guidance and direction to the rural development program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



The Soil Conservation Service gives technical assistance to individuals, groups, and local and State governments to help improve the use of land and water resources.

It works through local conservation districts, which cover 99 percent of the Nation's farms and ranches. Land users receive onsite assistance from district soil conservationists who last year helped land owners and operators prepare 80,829 new conservation plans and revise almost 38,000 existing plans.

The **Soil Conservation Service:**

\* **Administers the Great Plains Conservation Program**, an intensified, long-range program for farmers and ranchers in a large area of high winds, uncertain rainfall, and climatic extremes.

\* **Supports watershed protection and flood prevention** projects with financial and technical help. These projects assist an area's economy, provide dependable water supplies for farmers and small town residents and give flood protection.

\* **Assists** local citizens to develop and carry out **multicounty resource conservation and development projects** to improve the area's economy, social conditions, health and education facilities, and use of natural resources.

\* **Provides technical assistance to** landowners to establish outdoor recreation areas, and stimulates cities, counties, and States to develop public recreation.

\* **Administers the National Cooperative Soil Survey**, makes snow surveys, issues water supply forecasts, and heads the USDA National Inventory of Soil and Water Conservation Needs (CNI).



**SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE**



## AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

The Agricultural Research Service contributes to rural development by providing scientific support for the programs of Department of Agriculture action agencies.

The new plant varieties, improved animal breeds, and other innovations that flow from research laboratories have bolstered the economics of thousands of rural communities. Although most of the research contribution to rural development is indirect, a part of the ARS program is aimed specifically at improving incomes and living conditions in rural communities.

### **Agricultural Research Service:**

- \* **Publishes information** on maintaining a balanced diet with inexpensive food, including techniques of gardening and food preservation.

- \* **Designs** moderately-priced rural housing for low-income families.

- \* **Helps** communities develop new industries. For example, ARS scientists are finding ways to develop commercial rosin derivatives from ponderosa pine stumpage in Arizona and New Mexico, and establishing community canneries for locally grown vegetables.

- \* **Develops marketing facilities** in rural areas, to stimulate efficient marketing of farm commodities in areas where they are produced.

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, with offices in each State and 2,800 counties, administers programs designed to stabilize the Nation's agricultural economy, conserve farm resources, protect food and feed reserves, and aid in defense.

ASCS operates programs to balance supply and demand of certain farm products, through production adjustments, price support loans, purchases and payments, and management of stocks of commodities acquired under its programs.

Such programs contribute to rural economic progress and stability. They are carried out through farmer committees appointed at State, and elected at county and community levels.

Through the **Agricultural Conservation Program**, the Federal Government shares about half (more, for low-income farmers) of the cost of conservation practices which reduce pollution from agricultural resources, protect the soil, permit more efficient use of land and water, benefit wildlife, beautify the countryside, and retain open space.

\* **ACP special projects** assist communitywide attacks on special conservation problems affecting both rural and urban areas.

\* The **Cropland Adjustment Program** encourages farmers to take acreage out of production under long term contracts, offering them incentives to share their land facilities with town and city people.

\* The **Cropland Conversion Program**, on a test basis, has encouraged conversion from low-income crop production to other income-producing uses such as grass, trees, recreational, and wildlife developments.



## AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE



## COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH SERVICE

The Cooperative State Research Service administers Federal grants for research in agriculture, agricultural marketing and rural life, and for cooperative forestry research and other needed research facilities.

Funds are made available to State Agricultural Experiment Stations and other qualified institutions of higher learning in the 50 States and Puerto Rico.

The technical staff reviews research, proposed and in progress, and advises and assists in planning and coordinating the research among the States and between the States and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Research findings, translated into action programs, contribute to rural development through improved jobs and opportunities, improved income both farm and non-farm, and improved community institutions and services.

Some examples of current research include:

\* **Growth opportunities** through comprehensive development of recreational resources, including zoning best suited for recreation, residential, and industrial development.

\* **Economic analysis** of the market structure of the commercial fishing industry.

Requests for information and needed research may be made to the director of any State Agricultural Experiment Station or to the Administrator of the Service.



**ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE**

Economic Research Service provides economic information to the public, Government agencies, and the Congress. Data and information are prepared and used to analyze specific problems. These studies evaluate the consequences of alternative courses of action for solving many problems.

ERS often provides economic appraisals useful for improving programs of other USDA agencies.

It also does research and provides related special services to other Federal agencies.

**The Economic Research Service:**

- \* **Studies rural people** and their communities to learn how to improve incomes and the quality of living.

- \* **Studies changes** in composition and migration of the rural population.

- \* **Develops data** on the size and structure of the farm labor force, the sources and distribution of incomes of rural people and the effects of alternative programs to improve incomes and levels of living of the poorest families.

- \* **Determines** the availability of community services and how to help local governments improve those services.

Members of the ERS field research staff serve as consultants to State economic development committees.

Through cooperative work with universities, ERS supplies results of studies to Cooperative Extension Service specialists.



## FARMER COOPERATIVE SERVICE

Farmer Cooperative Service helps rural-based cooperatives through research, giving technical advice on specific problems, and providing general information.

Cooperative business enterprises implement rural development by providing jobs, generating income, adding to the tax base, and helping farmers increase their incomes by marketing and buying more effectively. They also help to train and develop community and area civic leaders.

Specific FCS programs geared to the needs and goals of cooperatives include:

- \* **Feasibility Studies.** Staff specialists go into an area to determine if a new service proposed for a cooperative or a new cooperative is likely to succeed.

- \* **Technical Assistance.** Staff specialists work closely with rural leaders, cooperative groups, and other agencies and institutions to provide help needed. One of its most valuable services is informing local groups on where they can go for advice and assistance.

- \* **Demonstration Program.** Farmer Cooperative Service has a contract with the North Carolina Rural Fund for Development. This makes possible one man's services for on-the-scene daily assistance to a new cooperative.



