

Amendment No.

Offered by Alma S. Adams, PhD

Amendment Description:

This amendment establishes an Office of Small Farms at USDA.

AMENDMENT

OFFERED BY Ms. Adams

At the end of subtitle D of title XII, add the following (and make such conforming changes as may be necessary):

1 **SEC. ____ . OFFICE OF SMALL FARMS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle B of the Department of
3 Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6931
4 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

5 **“SEC. 229. OFFICE OF SMALL FARMS.**

6 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7 “(1) SMALL FARM, RANCH, OR FOREST OPER-
8 ATION.—The term ‘small farm, ranch, or forest op-
9 eration’ means a farm, ranch, or forest operation
10 that—

11 “(A)(i) is less than 180 acres; or

12 “(ii) meets another acreage-based defini-
13 tion of ‘small’, as determined by the Secretary,
14 that takes into consideration—

15 “(I) the State or region in which the
16 farm, ranch, or forest operation is located;

17 “(II) the production system of the
18 farm, ranch, or forest operation; or

1 “(III) both; and

2 “(B) has an annual gross cash farm in-
3 come of less than \$350,000.

4 “(2) STATE OFFICE.—The term ‘State office’
5 means—

6 “(A) a State office of—

7 “(i) the Farm Service Agency;

8 “(ii) the Natural Resources Conserva-
9 tion Service; or

10 “(iii) the rural development mission
11 area; or

12 “(B) a regional office of the Risk Manage-
13 ment Agency.

14 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

15 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall estab-
16 lish within the farm production and conservation
17 mission area the Office of Small Farms.

18 “(2) DIRECTOR.—

19 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
20 appoint a Director of the Office of Small Farms
21 (referred to in this section as the ‘Director’).

22 “(B) FPAC.—A senior official within the
23 farm production and conservation mission area
24 may be appointed to serve as the Director.

25 “(c) DUTIES.—The Director shall—

1 “(1) coordinate efforts to improve support for
2 small farms, ranches, and forest operations across
3 all Department agencies and offices;

4 “(2) review Department programs and policies
5 and identify statutory, regulatory, and administra-
6 tive provisions, policies, and guidance that disadvan-
7 tage small farm, ranch, or forest operation participa-
8 tion, and recommend changes to ensure that those
9 programs and policies adequately serve small farms,
10 ranches, and forest operations;

11 “(3) develop recommendations for new initia-
12 tives, including financing mechanisms and technical
13 assistance opportunities, to specifically serve small
14 farms, ranches, and forest operations relating to
15 production, conservation, business planning, land ac-
16 cess, and other issues, as determined by the Sec-
17 retary;

18 “(4) make recommendations to Department
19 agencies and offices and other Federal agencies on
20 tracking small farm, ranch, or forest operation data,
21 including demographics and program participation
22 rates;

23 “(5) propose research agendas on topics that
24 are of special interest to small farms, ranches, and
25 forest operations;

1 “(6) provide or coordinate technical assistance
2 through the Department or through cooperative
3 agreements with other entities to operators of small
4 farms, ranches, and forest operations to assist those
5 operators—

6 “(A) to access the full complement of
7 available Department grant, cost-share, and
8 loan programs;

9 “(B) to implement activities using assist-
10 ance received under those programs; and

11 “(C) with farmland preservation, including
12 through succession planning;

13 “(7) implement a program directly or through
14 cooperative agreements with other entities to provide
15 grants of not more than \$25,000 to operators of
16 small farms, ranches, and forest operations for—

17 “(A) equipment and infrastructure repairs
18 and upgrades;

19 “(B) uninsured losses;

20 “(C) business planning and market devel-
21 opment assistance;

22 “(D) conservation practice adoption;

23 “(E) down payments for land acquisition;

24 and

1 “(F) such other purposes as the Secretary
2 determines to be appropriate;

3 “(8) operate a hotline through which operators
4 of small farms, ranches, and forest operations can
5 anonymously report problems that the operators en-
6 counter in attempts to access Department programs;

7 “(9) collaborate with other Federal and State
8 agencies on how to effectively reach and serve small
9 farms, ranches, and forest operations; and

10 “(10) determine whether to approve a plan sub-
11 mitted by a State small farms coordinator under
12 subsection (e)(3)(A)(ii).

13 “(d) LIAISONS.—

14 “(1) APPOINTMENT.—The following officials
15 shall appoint, from among the officers and employ-
16 ees under the respective official, a liaison to the Of-
17 fice of Small Farms:

18 “(A) The Chief of the Natural Resources
19 Conservation Service.

20 “(B) The Administrator of the Farm Serv-
21 ice Agency.

22 “(C) The Administrator of the Risk Man-
23 agement Agency.

24 “(D) The Under Secretary of Agriculture
25 for Rural Development.

1 “(E) The Director of the National Insti-
2 tute of Food and Agriculture.

3 “(F) The Administrator of the Agricultural
4 Marketing Service.

5 “(G) The Administrator of the Economic
6 Research Service.

7 “(H) The Administrator of the National
8 Agricultural Statistics Service.

9 “(I) The Director of the Office of Partner-
10 ships and Public Engagement.

11 “(J) The heads of such other agencies, of-
12 fices, and advisory groups as the Secretary de-
13 termines to be appropriate, including—

14 “(i) the Office of Urban Agriculture
15 and Innovative Production; and

16 “(ii) the Office of Tribal Relations.

17 “(2) DUTIES.—Each liaison appointed under
18 paragraph (1) shall—

19 “(A) coordinate with the Office of Small
20 Farms and the other liaisons appointed under
21 that paragraph to develop and implement new
22 strategies for outreach to and education for
23 small farms, ranches, and forest operations;
24 and

1 “(B) coordinate within the agency, office,
2 mission area, or advisory group of the liaison
3 on issues and outreach relating to small farms,
4 ranches, and forest operations.

5 “(e) STATE SMALL FARMS COORDINATORS.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—

7 “(A) DESIGNATION.—

8 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Director, in
9 consultation with State food and agri-
10 culture councils and directors of State of-
11 fices, shall designate in each State a State
12 small farms coordinator from among the
13 employees of State offices.

14 “(ii) EMPLOYEES.—The employee of a
15 State office designated to be a State small
16 farms coordinator may be the same em-
17 ployee designated to be the State beginning
18 farmer and rancher coordinator under sec-
19 tion 7404(c) of the Farm Security and
20 Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C.
21 6934a(c)).

22 “(B) REQUIREMENTS.—To be designated
23 as a State small farms coordinator, an employee
24 shall—

1 “(i) be familiar with issues relating to
2 small farms, ranches, and forest oper-
3 ations; and

4 “(ii) have the ability to coordinate
5 with other Federal departments and agen-
6 cies.

7 “(2) TRAINING.—The Secretary shall develop a
8 training plan to provide to each State small farms
9 coordinator knowledge of programs and services
10 available from the Department for small farms,
11 ranches, and forest operations, taking into consider-
12 ation the needs of all types of production methods.

13 “(3) DUTIES.—

14 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A State small farms
15 coordinator—

16 “(i) shall coordinate technical assist-
17 ance at the State level to assist small
18 farms, ranches, and forest operations in
19 accessing programs of the Department;

20 “(ii) shall develop and submit to the
21 Director for approval a State plan to im-
22 prove the coordination, delivery, and effi-
23 cacy of programs of the Department to
24 small farms, ranches, and forest oper-
25 ations, taking into consideration the needs

1 of all types of production methods, at each
2 county and area office in the State;

3 “(iii) shall oversee implementation of
4 an approved State plan described in clause
5 (ii);

6 “(iv) may facilitate interagency and
7 interdepartmental collaboration on issues
8 relating to small farms, ranches, and forest
9 operations at the State or regional level;

10 “(v) shall work with outreach coordi-
11 nators in the State offices to ensure appro-
12 priate information about technical assist-
13 ance is available at outreach events and ac-
14 tivities;

15 “(vi) shall coordinate partnerships
16 and joint outreach efforts with other orga-
17 nizations and government agencies serving
18 small farms, ranches, and forest oper-
19 ations; and

20 “(vii) may provide grants under sub-
21 section (c)(7), in accordance with criteria
22 established by the Director.

23 “(B) INDIVIDUAL DUTIES.—Not less than
24 50 percent of the duties of an employee des-
25 igned to be a State small farms coordinator

1 shall be the duties described in subparagraph
2 (A) or other duties relating to small farms,
3 ranches, and forest operations.

4 “(f) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Annually, the Sec-
5 retary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of
6 the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agri-
7 culture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report
8 describing—

9 “(1) the efforts of the Secretary to enhance
10 participation by small farms, ranches, and forest op-
11 erations in agricultural programs; and

12 “(2) the results achieved to enhance such par-
13 ticipation for each such agricultural program.

14 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
15 are authorized to be appropriated—

16 “(1) \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2027
17 through 2031 for the administration of the Office of
18 Small Farms; and

19 “(2) \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2027
20 through 2031 to provide technical assistance and
21 grants authorized by this section.”.

22 (b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—The Department of
23 Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 is amended by re-

1 designating the first section 225 (7 U.S.C. 6925) (relating
2 to the Food Access Liaison) as section 224A.

