
1. Q. What effect would the reorganization plan have upon soil conservation work on American farms?

A. We are undertaking to streamline the functions of the United States Department of Agriculture in as many areas as is possible. For example, we propose to eliminate the regional offices of the Soil Conservation Service because we believe the most effective line of operation is from the Federal Government directly to the States, Counties, and local communities where the service is rendered. Technicians would be placed in the States in order to be nearer to the individual farms where the soil conservation work must be done. We doubt if farmers over the country will miss the regional SCS offices. Like farmers, we are interested first in conservation of the soil—all that we can get for the dollars spent—and not so much in maintaining more Government offices.

2. Q. Do you plan to consolidate the Soil Conservation Service with the Agricultural Extension Service?

A. No.

3. Q. Do you plan to turn over to the Agricultural Extension Service any functions or activities now carried on by the Soil Conservation Service?

A. No.

4. Q. Do you plan to contract with the Land Grant Colleges for technical assistance to Soil Conservation Districts?

A. No. Technical assistance now being supplied from the regional office would come from the State SCS offices and Washington SCS office.

5. Q. What would be the status of the State Conservationist in the proposed reorganization?

A. No change is proposed in the title of the State Conservationist. This position would continue to be a career civil service job. Additional responsibilities would be assigned this position. He would report directly to the head of the Soil Conservation Service. The State staff would be strengthened, and provision would be made for assistance in special technical fields and supervision of watershed projects which cross State lines.
6. Q. What effect would the reorganization have on Soil Conservation Districts?
A. There would be no change in the services to the Soil Conservation Dis-
tricts. With the responsibility for the program in the State Conserva-
tionist, direction of activities within the States would be more responsive
to local needs and thus result in more effective service to the districts. By
putting the technical control under the State SCS office, the program
would be more closely aligned with soil conditions within the State and
better adapted to the livestock and cropping pattern.

7. Q. How would the technical services to districts be handled? Would the re-
organization reduce the number of technical personnel?
A. Reorganization would not necessarily affect the number of technical per-
sonnel available to districts. However, as in the case of any Government
activity, the level of operation for the next fiscal year will be governed
by funds available. In view of the necessity to work toward a balanced
budget, it may be necessary to effect further economies in the Soil Con-
servation Service as well as in other agencies of Government. No final
determination has as yet been made.

8. Q. Would there be a reduction in force in the Soil Conservation Service?
A. The total personnel in the Soil Conservation Service consist of 14,029.
Of these, 11,824 are in work units or directly serving the 2,570 Soil
Conservation Districts. In area offices serving more than one district,
there are 660 employees, not counting technicians serving work units.
In State offices there are 449; in regional offices, 892; and in the
Washington office, 204. A great deal has been said about the technical
specialists in the regional offices. Actually, there are only 300 such
persons. Most of these would be transferred to the State and to
Washington. The economics in reorganization would permit some reduction
in force. However, the total change in numbers of personnel would de-
pend on the level of funds available for 1955.

9. Q. Would some of the area offices within the States be eliminated?
A. There would be some consolidation of area offices. Such action would be
consistent with and a continuation of past policies and practices to im-
prove the efficiency of operation and is not necessarily a part of this
reorganization. Consolidation of some area offices within the States is
under study for the purpose of getting a larger percentage of activities
allocated to work units.
10. Q. In what way would State offices of the Soil Conservation Service be strengthened?

A. These would be strengthened by the addition of some technical personnel, as well as additional personnel to handle administrative services required for budget, personnel, and fiscal matters. In most States the State Conservationist would have a three-man technical staff—a Conservation Engineer, a State Soil Scientist, and a Soil Conservationist. He would have the services of plant technology field specialists in agronomy, range, planting materials, forestry, biology, and research liaison who would each serve a number of States. They would be attached to the Washington office of SCS and would be located in the different areas of the country. Seven cartographic laboratories will be maintained to serve the cartographic needs of the various State programs. Seven field servicing units would be maintained to provide engineering design and watershed planning services to the flood prevention and watershed programs in States.

11. Q. How would watershed and flood prevention work be handled?

A. Technical personnel would be located in the field to serve these projects. These persons would be attached to the Washington office, but many of them would be located where the Service maintains cartographic laboratories. They would give technical assistance on this work as well as other phases of the soil and water conservation program.

12. Q. Were the reorganization proposals discussed with individuals and groups outside the Department before they were announced?

A. Yes. These include the Senate Agriculture Committee, the House Agriculture Committee, the Senate and House Subcommittees on Agriculture of the Appropriations Committees, representatives of the farm organizations—The National Grange, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Farmers Union, and the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives—the National Agricultural Advisory Commission, representatives of the Land Grant Colleges, officials of the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts, commodity groups, representatives of the President's Committee on Reorganization of the Government, representatives of the Budget Bureau, the Civil Service Commission and many others both inside and outside Government.

13. Q. When would this reorganization be put into effect?

A. It will require several weeks to work out sufficient of the detail before a start can be made in actually implementing the reorganization. We will welcome any suggestions during this period that people may have regarding their ideas as to the type of organization that would best serve the farmers of the Nation.