

News Release

Farm Service Agency
Public Affairs Staff

1400 Independence Ave. SW
Stop 0506
Washington, DC 20250-0506

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Dann Stuart (202)690-0474
Dan_Stuart@wdc.fsa.usda.gov

FSA ADMINISTRATOR NAMES NEW OFFICIALS

WASHINGTON, January 14, 1998 – Keith Kelly, Administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA), announced today that James Kearney has been appointed as a Special Assistant to the Administrator. At the same time he announced the appointment of Robert Springer to the post of Executive Director for State Operations.

Mr. Kearney's role will be to work with the Administrator in developing the Agency's role in ensuring the successful implementation of Administrative Convergence in the USDA. He will also work on further developing and improving the Outreach and Farm Credit programs.

Mr. Springer's job will be to oversee and direct FSA's 50 State Executive Directors and 250 appointed State Committeemen, fully utilizing their skills and capabilities in the delivery of the Agency's programs. He is also charged with responsibility for implementing FSA's Civil Rights and Outreach to Small and Minority Farmers programs.

Mr. Kearney currently works as the North Carolina State Director for the Rural Development Administration, a post he has held since May, 1993. He began his career with the Department of Agriculture in 1965 as a Farmers Home Administration Assistant County Supervisor. From 1980 to 1993, he served as a District Director for that Agency. Mr. Kearney entered the U.S. Army in 1996 as a Lieutenant, and currently holds the rank of Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University, and a Graduate Certificate from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth.

Mr. Springer's current appointment is as FSA State Executive Director for Alabama, to which he was appointed in October 1993. During his appointment he has served on 9 FSA special task forces, and under his leadership Alabama's FSA operation received the Secretary's Award -- the highest award in the Department.

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Mr. Springer has also served as Executive Director of AGAPE of North Alabama, a non-profit organization providing foster care, adoptive services, maternity service and family counseling, and held a number of other leadership posts. He is married to the former Betty Mitchell, and has 3 children.

"FSA faces a number of important challenges as we enter into the 21st Century," said Kelly. "We must forthrightly address the issues of civil rights and reaching out to farmers who may not have been fully served in the past. And at the same time, we have to improve our efficiency so as to do more with less by empowering State office and to effect quick resolution of various issues, and placing the accountability with them. I'm confident that Mr. Kearney and Mr. Springer are the right men for the job, and I look forward to their help in dealing with these formidable tasks."

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