



U.S. Department of Agriculture

PRESS RELEASE

Secretary Rollins Announces New Slate of Presidential Appointments at USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Farm Service Agency, and Rural Development

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(Washington, D.C., May 27, 2025) – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins today announced the latest slate of presidential appointments for key positions at the U.S.

Department of Agriculture (USDA) including the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Rural Development (RD).

“President Trump is putting Farmers First, and so is the incredible team we are building at the Department of Agriculture. Our latest additions to the USDA family are personally invested in ensuring farmers and rural America prosper. I look forward to seeing the work they will do supporting farmers, ranchers, and producers across the country by implementing President Trump’s America First policies,” **said Secretary Rollins.**

FNS is focused on expanding access to healthy foods grown and raised by American farmers. FSA State Directors help implement President Trump’s America First agenda and execute USDA’s policies in planning, organizing, and administering FSA programs through state offices across the country. RD State Directors help affirm the mission of the Trump Administration by focusing on finding ways to empower rural America and unleash economic prosperity.



Patrick Penn Appointed as Deputy Under Secretary for the Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services

Patrick A. Penn will serve as Deputy Undersecretary for FNCS. Patrick grew up in foster care and served as a State Representative in the Kansas Legislature from 2021 to 2025, where he successfully championed reforming the foster care system, social welfare programs, and the burdensome regulatory landscape in Kansas. Penn is a decorated former Army Signal Officer with combat experience.

Alabama

Twinkle Cavanaugh Appointed as State Director, Alabama Rural Development

Twinkle Andress Cavanaugh will serve as State Director for Rural Development in Alabama. She previously served as President of the Alabama Public Service Commission where she was first elected statewide in 2010. In 2020, she received the most votes in Alabama history for a non-presidential candidate.

Alaska

Arthur Keyes Appointed as State Executive Director, Alaska Farm Service Agency

Arthur Keyes will serve as State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Alaska. With over two decades of agricultural experience, Arthur has led efforts to advance Alaska's agricultural policy and industry. From 2016 to 2019, as Director of the Alaska Division of Agriculture, he developed an internationally recognized, award-winning marketing program for Alaska Grown products. Arthur founded Alaska's highest-grossing farmers market in 2006.

Idaho

Kevin Andrus Appointed as State Executive Director, Idaho Farm Service Agency

Kevin Andrus will serve as State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Idaho. He previously served in the Idaho House of Representatives, where he chaired the House Agriculture Committee. Kevin has hands-on experience in agricultural production, including raising cattle and horses, and has also worked as a loan officer for Ireland Bank.



Rick Youngblood Appointed as State Director, Idaho Rural Development

Rick D. Youngblood will serve as State Director for Rural Development in Idaho. He is an Idaho native who served as a Contract Legislative Advisor for Select Health of Idaho after retiring in 2022 with a career as an executive banker and serving five terms as an Idaho State Representative with two terms as Chairman of Appropriations. Rick attended North Idaho College, College of Idaho, and graduated from Northwest Ag Credit School at Washington State University and Pacific Coast Banking School at University of Washington.

Indiana

Steve Howell Appointed as State Director, Indiana Rural Development

Steve Howell will serve as State Director for Rural Development in Indiana. He previously served as Director of Community Affairs for the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and as Deputy District Director for Congressman Mark Souder. He is also engaged in his family farm in Jay County, Indiana.

Steve Brown Appointed as State Executive Director, Indiana Farm Service Agency

Steve Brown will serve as the State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Indiana. Steve formerly served as the Indiana State Executive Director for FSA in the first Trump Administration. He has been actively involved in his family farming operation for

over 40 years. Steve is a former USDA employee with 32 years of experience working in Porter and Carroll counties as well as the Indiana State FSA Office. He was inducted into the Carroll County Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2023.

Maine

John Butera Appointed as State Director, Maine Rural Development

John Butera will serve as State Director for Rural Development in Maine. John recently served as Vice President, Commercial Loan Officer at Skowhegan Savings Bank. He previously served as Senior Economic Advisor and Commissioner of Labor to Maine Governor Paul LePage.

Tommy R. Higgins Appointed as State Executive Director, Maine Farm Service Agency



Tommy R. Higgins will serve as the State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Maine. Most recently, Tommy served as the Deputy State Director of USDA Rural Development in Maine. He previously served as Associate Enterprise Director and Assistant State Director in USDA Rural Development, and as a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army. Tommy earned his Master of Science degree in International Relations from Troy State University and his Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration from the University of Maine.

New York

Richard Mayfield Appointed as State Director, New York Rural Development

Richard Mayfield returns to the role of State Director for Rural Development in New York. Richard brings over thirty years of Federal, State and Local government experience to this position, most recently as Director of Central Service for Dutchess County. He previously served as Director of Operations and Press Secretary for Orange County, NY, and Director of Community Development in Orange County, NY.

Ohio

Donald Jones Appointed as State Executive Director, Ohio Farm Service Agency

Donald “Don” Jones will serve as State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Ohio. Don was most recently in his fourth term in the Ohio House of Representatives, where

he chaired the Agriculture Committee and served on the Natural Resource, Finance and Education committees. Don, along with his wife Amy, runs a 30 head commercial cow/calf operation and markets hay.

Charles Tassell Appointed as State Director, Ohio Rural Development

Charles Tassell will serve as the State Director for Rural Development in Ohio. Charles has worked on housing and development policy for over 30 years, most recently as the COO for the National Real Estate Investors Association. Charles has served as an elected Council Member in Deer Park, Ohio for 8 years, is an author, and an Advisor and Professor for the international university: Lisbon Business and Government School.

Pennsylvania



Richard Ebert Appointed as State Executive Director, Pennsylvania Farm Service Agency

Richard Ebert will serve as State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Pennsylvania. A farmer from Blairsville, PA, he previously served as President of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau from 2014–2022. He served on the American Farm Bureau board of directors from 2018–2022. The Ebert family has a diversified farm operation of beef, sheep, and vegetables.

Puerto Rico

Nelson Albino Appointed as State Director, Puerto Rico Rural Development

Nelson Albino will serve as the State Director for Rural Development in Puerto Rico. He comes from the private sector working in the healthcare industry on different executive roles. He also serves our Country as a volunteer in the Civil Air Patrol and is a devout Catholic.

Rhode Island

Robert Sullivan Appointed as State Executive Director, Rhode Island Farm Service Agency

Robert D. Sullivan will serve as State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Rhode Island. He is a lifelong Rhode Islander with a deep commitment to public service and a devotion for the state's floriculture industry. Robert's career as a landscape contractor allowed him to cultivate a love for nature. He recently served on the Board of Directors for

the Southern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, where he founded the Southern Rhode Island Young Professionals.

South Dakota

Lorraine Polak Appointed as State Director, South Dakota Rural Development

Lorraine Polak will serve as State Director for Rural Development in South Dakota. Growing up on a dairy farm in Nebraska, Lorraine has worked in public service for more than 30 years in the areas of housing and economic development serving most recently as the Housing Policy Specialist for U.S. Senator Mike Rounds.

Roger Chase Appointed as State Executive Director, South Dakota Farm Service Agency



Roger Chase will serve as State Director for the Farm Service Agency in South Dakota. He has an extensive background in both business and agriculture. He is an owner and partner in Chase Grain and Cattle with his oldest son. The farm raises diversified crops and cattle. He served as a State Representative in South Dakota from 2017-2024, conducting several leadership assignments on summer studies, and Chaired the House Agriculture and Natural Resources committee.

Wisconsin

Andrew C. Iverson Appointed as State Director, Wisconsin Rural Development

Andrew C. Iverson will serve as State Director for Rural Development in Wisconsin. Iverson most recently served as Executive Director for the Republican Party of Wisconsin and previously held positions with the Republican National Committee, Senator Ron Johnson, Representative Bryan Steil and others.

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