MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

And

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

CONCERNING THE LOCATION OF FEDERAL FACILITIES

Purpose. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to provide an effective arrangement whereby the Department of Agriculture and the General Services Administration will cooperate to implement the National Urban Policy. This memorandum requires that in urban areas and incorporated rural communities, offices and facilities of the Department will be located in central business areas whenever such location is consistent with program requirements.

1. The President's March 27, 1978, message on urban policy included a directive to the General Services Administration to retain Federal facilities in urban areas and to put new ones there.

2. On August 16, 1978, the President signed Executive Order 12072, "Federal Space Management" which requires the location of Federal facilities in such a manner as to strengthen the Nation's cities, and mandates that in urban areas first consideration be given to locating Federal facilities in the central business area or adjacent areas of similar character.

3. The Secretary of Agriculture recognizes the significant role the Department can play and the need to assist the Administrator of General Services in carrying out the requirements of Executive Order 12072.

4. The Rural Development Act of 1972, as amended, requires that consideration be given to locating Federal facilities in rural areas. The new Executive Order on Federal Space Management is consistent with the requirements of the Rural Development Act because it concerns the location of agencies subsequent to considering the requirements of the Act.

5. It is the policy of the Department of Agriculture to house within the same building (colocate) the county level offices of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Cooperative Extension Service, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, Farmers Home Administration, and Soil Conservation Service, as well as local offices of other Agriculture agencies delivering services at that level. The General Services Administration supports this policy.

6. The Department of Agriculture and the General Services Administration agree that:

a. The program and mission requirements of the agencies of the Department permit most of their offices and facilities above the county level to function suitably in the central business area of the urban areas where they are located. This includes all regional and state offices, certain research facilities, and all agencies whose operations are not affected in the delivery of services by location.

b. First consideration will be given to housing county level field offices in federally controlled space in the central business area of urban areas and incorporated rural communities. However, in cases where federally controlled space is available it must be economically adaptable to meet Agriculture needs in a timely manner (including the total needs for colocated facilities). Otherwise, the primary locational consideration shall be the program requirements of the agencies and accessibility for their clientele. In such instances, the outskirts of the cities and towns are more appropriate for these activities. Additionally, central business district locations are often not suitable for Forest Service District Ranger offices and other offices with special program needs for specific locations, such as plant, grain, animal, meat inspectors, and certain research facilities, or cooperative functions with state and local governments.

7. Therefore, this agreement will govern the acquisition of space by the General Services Administration for the Department of Agriculture, and the Department using its own or delegated leasing authority.

When a variance from this agreement is requested by either agency it shall be the responsibility of the requesting agency to present a compelling and fully substantiated case.

8. The terms "urban area" and "central business area" are used in accordance with the definitions in the Federal Property Management Regulations.

9. This agreement and guidelines shall remain in effect until cancelled by one or both parties on ninety days notice.

10. The parties to this Memorandum of Understanding agree to meet and review this agreement for effectiveness after the conclusion of one year.

Jim Williams
Acting Secretary of Agriculture

10-25-79
Date

Administrator of General Services

10/29/79
Date

Guidelines in Support of Memorandum of Understanding Between U.S. Department of Agriculture and General Services Administration Concerning the Location of Federal Facilities

The Memorandum of Understanding will permit the Department to support GSA in implementing Executive Order 12072, particularly the requirement to locate Federal facilities in the central business area of communities, while at the same time recognizing the location requirements of certain special facilities and the county level field service offices. This will assist the Department in its colocation policy for county level offices and other local offices of Agriculture agencies delivering service at that level. The objectives of this policy are to:

-- Provide better service to clients through one stop access and improved office coverage

-- Increase public participation in conservation and stabilization through increased exposure to the full range of available programs

-- Disseminate information to more prospective users by directing the clients of one agency to the services of another

-- Improve the cooperation of Federal, State, and county program administration

-- Achieve administrative economies

-- Enable closer coordination of Agriculture county level programs at the delivery point

To achieve these goals, the support of GSA is required by treating these offices as a single unit in leasing actions when requested by the Department.

Because of the differences in the ways in which the involved agencies are required by statute to procure and manage space, accommodations in leasing arrangements and charges are necessary to permit maximum colocation. For example, space for Cooperative Extension Service (CES) is provided or funded by the county government. In cases where CES cannot locate in Federal space, and the Department does not have delegated leasing authority, GSA should, consistent with the Federal Procurement Regulations and the Federal Property Management Regulations, lease space from or through the county in order to permit colocation.

For similar cases in which Agriculture county offices are working through cooperative efforts with State and county counterparts (e.g. Conservation Districts, State Forestry Offices, County Planning Boards, Representative Committees), and the Department does not have delegated leasing authority, GSA should, consistent with the Federal Procurement Regulations and the Federal Property Management Regulations, acquire space to permit the Agriculture offices to be located with these State and local groups.

Agriculture county level office programs are largely service oriented and depend on voluntary public participation for their effectiveness in achieving key national objectives of resource conservation, economic stabilization, and rural development. It is necessary that GSA recognize that location, provision, maintenance, and accessibility of county office facilities have a direct and significant impact on achieving this mission and must be administered accordingly.

Consistent with the Rural Development Act of 1972, as amended, the new Executive Order on Federal Space Management will not be used as a basis for moving Agriculture offices from rural to urban communities.

All Agriculture regional offices, State offices, and certain research facilities, and all agencies whose operations are not affected by location will be located in the central business area of the community in which they are located whenever such location is consistent with program requirements. Exceptions will be considered only on a case-by-case basis where application of this policy represents clearly demonstrable and quantifiable inhibitions to the delivery of program services.

First consideration will be given to housing county level field offices in federally controlled space in the central business district of the community. Exceptions, in addition to lack of sufficient economically adaptable space, must be based on clearly demonstrable inadequacies, such as inadequate parking for clientele, prohibition of trucks and other commercial vehicles on the streets leading to the building, location of the building in a community outside the area being served, failure to meet the handicapped requirements, unsafe or unhealthful working conditions.