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Farm Service Agency

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Biden Administration Appoints Dr. Ronald Howell, Jr. to Serve as State Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency in Virginia

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 3, 2022— The Biden Administration recently appointed Dr. Ronald Howell, Jr. as the new State Executive Director (SED) for the USDA Virginia Farm Service Agency (FSA). Dr. Howell joined the Virginia FSA team on Jan. 31, 2022.

“Individuals selected to serve as FSA State Executive Directors are incredible public servants who have a proven track record when it comes to their commitment to advance their states and communities,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “Each will serve on the frontlines, carrying out USDA’s mission at the state level and ensuring the voice of each and every USDA customer is heard. We are fortunate to have each of these talented individuals at this critical time for farmers and producers and rural communities across America.”

Dr. Howell comes to this new position with more than 12 years of professional experience in higher education, state, and federal government. In summer 2018, he began his tenure as the Director of Operations and Management in the College of Agriculture at Virginia State University. In this capacity, he oversees day-to-day operations of the College and the University’s Farm. He also carries an administrative appointment in the Department of Agriculture and serves as a faculty instructor, teaching courses in agriculture education and mechanization.

Previously, Dr. Howell served as the Special Assistant/Advisor for Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives to the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, in the Office of Virginia Governors McAuliffe and Northam, respectively. Across the Commonwealth, he worked to strengthen outreach efforts as well as minority and limited resourced producers’ participation in USDA and state-based agricultural and conservation programs. Additionally, he provided recommendations for the Virginia Farm Business Development Program (VFBD) and the Governor’s Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development (AFID) Program.

As SED, Dr. Howell will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of FSA programs to agricultural producers in Virginia. These commodity, conservation, credit, and disaster assistance programs

ensure a safe, affordable, abundant, and nutritious food, fiber, and fuel supply for consumers.

“The State Executive Director is a pivotal leadership position for the Agency and for the agricultural producers we serve,” said Marcus Graham, FSA Deputy Administrator for Field Operations. “These leaders, appointed by the Biden-Harris Administration, bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to their respective states. We are happy to have them on board and wish them much success.”

Farm Service Agency serves farmers, ranchers, foresters, and agricultural partners through the effective, efficient, and equitable delivery of federal agricultural programs. The Agency offers producers a strong safety net through the administration of farm commodity and disaster programs. Additionally, through conservation programs, FSA continues to preserve and protect natural resources and provides credit to agricultural producers who are unable to receive private, commercial credit, including targeted loan funds for beginning, underserved, women and military veterans involved in production agriculture.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit? www.usda.gov.

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