



# LOUISIANA SENATE

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## **Senator Bret Allain Reacts to St. Mary FSA Staying Open**

Today, local farmers and residents of St. Mary Parish received welcomed and good news from Washington, D.C. The U.S. Department of Agriculture released its final list of Farm Service Agency (FSA) closures designed to curb costs during tough budgetary times. St. Mary FSA was finally left off of that list.

Initially, the St. Mary office located in Franklin was on the chopping block despite the fact that the location was over 20 miles from the nearest FSA location in New Iberia. USDA mandated that a site could be closed if it was “within” 20 miles of the nearest location.

State Senator Bret Allain—a sugarcane farmer by trade—opposed the measures from the outset and knew the hardship that would be placed on farmers. Sen. Allain was always encouraged that the local congressional delegation in Washington was on board early to find a remedy for the situation.

“We definitely had strength in numbers. In politics, having a lot of folks putting pressure where its needed can make all the difference.”

Sen. Allain also hand-delivered a letter to Deputy Under Secretary Michael Scuse while in Washington in February.

“St. Mary’s office clearly did not fit USDA’s own criteria for a closure. St. Mary FSA is a vital part of the agricultural fabric of our area. Our local farmers would have had to travel anywhere from 25-60 miles simply to report acreage. It just did not make any sense,” Sen. Allain said.

Senator Mary Landrieu, Senator David Vitter, Representative Jeff Landry, and Representative Charles Boustany played important roles in convincing USDA to allow St. Mary FSA to remain open.

“I want to personally thank our senators and congressmen for their tremendous and hard work on this issue. Each deserve credit for making this happen. The many meetings, phone

calls, and letters to USDA from our delegation paid dividends today,” Sen. Allain added.

The local congressional delegation spoke with a clear and united voice and relentlessly made the case that St. Mary FSA should not be closed, and Representative Sam Jones and Parish President Paul Naquin both added to that strength in message over the last few months. The people of St. Mary also made their position clear at a public hearing held in Franklin in February.

Without these many voices, St. Mary FSA may have had a different fate.

“Our representatives in Washington worked for and on behalf of the people of St. Mary Parish by keeping this office open. Many times we hear of what Washington gets wrong. Today, I want everyone to know that they got this one right,” Sen. Allain said.

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