What Are County Committees?

More than 7,700 elected members serve on County Committees that meet in more than 2,200 USDA Service Centers nationwide. Committee members, consisting of farmers and ranchers help deliver FSA programs in their local farming communities. Members meet approximately once a month, depending on the tasks at hand. The committee may call a special meeting to respond to an unexpected situation such as a natural disaster.

A County Committee is composed of 3 to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA) and each member serves a 3-year term. One-third of these seats are up for election each year. County Committees may also have one or more appointed advisors to further represent the local interests of minority and women farmers and ranchers.

USDA is committed to increasing the participation of all farmers and ranchers on the FSA County Committees, with an emphasis on women and minority farmers and ranchers, including African-Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Hispanics, Asians, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Beginning farmers and ranchers are also highly encouraged to become involved.

What Kinds of Decisions Do Members Help With?

FSA County Committees operate under official regulations for federal farm programs. Committee members apply their judgment, experience, and knowledge when making local decisions regarding:

- Producer appeals;
- Commodity price support loans and payments.
- Conservation programs.
- Employing county executive directors.
- Incentive, indemnity, and disaster payments for commodities.
- Other farm disaster assistance.

Who Can Be a Candidate?

Producers elect farmers and ranchers to County Committees. The following are some of the requirements for being a candidate to serve on a County Committee:

- Be of legal voting age.
- Live in the LAA holding an election.
- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA.

For a complete list of the eligibility requirements, see the FSA factsheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member" available online at **http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections** or at your USDA Service Center.

Why run for Office?

Committee members are local agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties and are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, you become part of local decisionmaking that helps deliver many FSA programs.

When and Where to Submit Nominations for County Committees

Beginning each June, nominations will be accepted at USDA Service Centers. Individuals may nominate candidates for the County Committee from a list of voters who may be eligible to serve in the LAA holding an election. The list is maintained by the local Service Center.

- Names for candidacy (nominations) are submitted using an official FSA nomination form. Nomination forms are available at local USDA Service Centers and on the FSA Web site: **http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.**
- Candidates may nominate themselves or be nominated by others.
- Nomination forms must be submitted to the Service Center or be postmarked on or before the closing date of the nomination period.
- Nomination forms must be signed by the nominee, whether self-nominated or nominated by someone else.

Who Can Vote?

Agricultural producers of legal voting age can vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. Check with your USDA Service Center or on the FSA Web site for more information on voting requirements. Voting eligibility is not limited by the size of a farming operation or type of production.

What Is the Voting Process?

In early November, ballots are mailed to all eligible voters. Eligible voters can also pick up ballots at their local Service Centers. The deadline for voting is the end of the day of the first Monday in December. The ballots are counted within 7 calendar days after the voting deadline. The public is given a 10-calendar-day advance notice of the ballot counting. The meeting to count ballots is open to the public.

Vote Breakdown

A plurality (most votes), not a majority (50 percent plus one vote), determines who is elected. Election to a County Committee position is determined as follows:

- **Most Votes:** Three-year term on the County Committee.
- **Second Most Votes:** Three-year term as first alternate to a committee member.
- **Third Most Votes:** Three-year term as second alternate to a committee member.

More than 7,700 County Committee members serve in more than 2,200 offices nationwide. Roughly one-third of these seats are up for election each year.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) urges eligible farmers and ranchers to participate and vote in their local County Committee elections. Farmers and ranchers of legal voting age may vote and run for office if they are participating or cooperating in an FSA program.

The committee election process is designed to give landowners, farmers, and ranchers a better chance of having their opinions and ideas expressed in the community, throughout FSA and throughout the Nation.

VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE

What Is the Election Timeline?

June:	FSA offices begin accepting nominations.
August:	Final date to return or postmark nomination forms.
November:	Ballots are mailed to eligible voters who cast ballots.
December:	Ballots are submitted and counted.
January:	Committee members and alternates take office.

FSA shares this information with local or State groups that are interested in increasing minority access to FSA programs. For more information, visit your local USDA Service Center or the FSA Web site at **http://www.fsa.usda.gov.**

Make a Difference:

NOMINATE AND VOTE!

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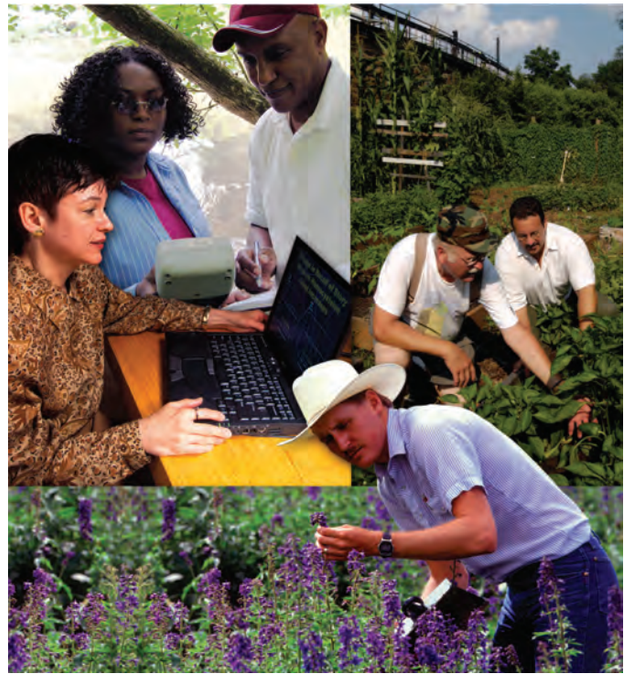
USDA

FSA FARM SERVICE AGENCY

County Committees

Vote for Your Local FSA County Committee Members



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