OFA FACTSHEET

Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees

Every FSA office in the U.S. is required by law to have an advisory board of local farmers called a county committee. Members of the board are local farmers nominated and elected by area farmers and landowners. FSA county committees play a large role in the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow for grassroots input which impacts federal decision making. Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA county committees.

WHAT DO FSA COUNTY COMMITTEES DO?

- **Provide Input on Local FSA Program Administration Decisions Including:**
  - Commodity price support loans and payments
  - Conservation programs
  - Disaster assistance payments
  - Emergency programs
  - Producer appeals

- **FSA Program Involvement:**
  - Inform farmers of the purpose and provisions of FSA programs
  - Make recommendations to the state committee on how to improve delivery of existing programs
  - Monitor changes in farm programs

- **Representation:**
  - Represent the priorities and voice of all producers and production types
  - Make sure socially disadvantaged (SDA) farmers are fairly represented
  - Shape the culture of local FSA offices, improve customer service, and support farmer outreach

HOW DOES A FSA COUNTY COMMITTEE FUNCTION?

- **Committees are made up of 3 to 11 members who serve three-year terms**
  - Chair & Vice Chair- preside over monthly meetings and lead the group in approving cost-share rates, disaster assistance, and commodity loans
  - Voting member
  - Minority non-voting advisor
  - Appointed voting socially disadvantaged (SDA) member (if applicable)

- **There is a term limit of three terms** (nine consecutive years)

- **Voting:** positions are voted on among the current county committee members at the organizational meeting held each January
  - If a particular role interests an elected nominee, they should communicate this during the initial January meeting after elections occur

- **Time Commitment:** Meetings are held monthly and last approximately 2-3 hours
  - Conference calls may be called between monthly meetings to respond to unexpected situations

- **Compensation:** Committee members receive reimbursement for travel to and from monthly meetings as well as a stipend for their time

- **Training:** Required security and ethics training

WHO CAN BE NOMINATED FOR CANDIDACY?

- Candidates may nominate themselves or be nominated by others
- Candidate requirements:
  - Be of legal voting age (tribal agricultural landowners who are 18 years of older are also eligible)
  - Live in the local administrative area (LAA) holding an election
  - Participate or cooperate in a USDA program administered by the FSA such as:
    - Disaster assistance programs
    - Commodity and price support programs
    - Conservation programs
    - Farm loan programs
    - Program cooperation
- Names for nominations are submitted using an official FSA nomination form
- Nomination forms are available at local USDA FSA offices and on the FSA website: fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/elections

FSA COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT DATES

June: FSA offices begin accepting nominations

August: Final date to return or postmark nomination forms at your local USDA Service Center

Early November: FSA County Committee ballots are mailed to eligible voters

December: Committee elections are conducted. Last day to return voted ballots to a USDA Service Center

January: Newly elected committee members and alternates take office

For more information, visit your local USDA Service Center or online at:
www.fsa.usda.gov

THE IMPACT OF ORGANIC REPRESENTATION:

- **More tailored** disaster and risk management support
- **Outreach and Education:** Elected committee members with organic farming experience can support their organic farmer peers and speak on barriers and strengths of organic farming
- **Stronger organic farming representation** and incorporation into local and federal decision making
- **Advocacy** for improved delivery of FSA programs for organic producers