

What Are County Committees?

More than 7,000 elected members serve on County Committees that meet in more than 2,000 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 three to five elected members from local administrative areas (LAA), each member serving 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 minority and women farmers and ranchers, a group including African Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Hispanics, Asians, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and women.



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; and
- Other farm disaster assistance.

Who Can Be a Candidate?

Producers elect producers 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; and
- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA.

For a complete list of the eligibility requirements, see the FSA fact sheet titled “FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member” available online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> 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. By being elected, you become part of local decisionmaking that helps deliver many FSA programs.

When and Where Is Sign-up for County Committee Nominations?

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

- 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>.
- 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 Center. 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.