



Bristol/Norfolk Farm Service Agency
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June 6, 2017

Dear Sir or Madam,

FSA is conducting its annual County Committee election. The nomination period for these elections opened on June 15, 2017 and runs through August 1, 2017. The Local Administrative Areas holding elections this year and the towns they are comprised of are as follows:

Local Administrative Area 3: Acushnet, Berkley, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Freetown, New Bedford, Raynham, and Taunton

Local Administrative Area 5: Avon, Boston, Braintree, Brookline, Canton, Chelsea, Cohasset, Dedham, Holbrook, Milton, Quincy, Randolph, Revere, Sharon, Stoughton, Weymouth and Winthrop.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could post the enclosed factsheets and nomination petition where it can be viewed by the general public, or share it with people who may be interested. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie A. Viveiros', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Julie A. Viveiros
County Executive Director
Bristol/Norfolk/Suffolk County FSA

UNIFORM GUIDELINES

USDA issued uniform guidelines for county committee elections to help ensure that FSA county committees fairly represent the agricultural producers of a county or multi-county jurisdiction, especially underserved (minority and women) producers. Targeted underserved producers are African-Americans, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders. In addition to minority and women producers, USDA strongly encourages beginning farmers to actively seek a position on a county committee. The guidelines govern the FSA county committee election process and are designed to increase participation of underserved (minorities and women).

The following are just some of the specifics of the guidelines:

- If no valid nominations are filed, the Secretary of Agriculture may nominate up to two individuals to be placed on the ballot.
- FSA county committees annually review local administrative area boundaries to ensure the fair representation of minority and women producers in their county or multi-county jurisdictions.
- FSA county offices locate and recruit eligible candidates identified as minority and women farmers and ranchers as potential nominees for the FSA county committee elections through outreach and publicity, including the development of partnerships with community-based organizations.

The guidelines are located at FSA County Committee Elections page at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

APPOINTED VOTING MEMBERS

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 provides the Secretary of Agriculture with the authority to appoint targeted underserved committee members with voting privileges to serve on FSA county committees in county or multi-county jurisdictions that lack fair representation from those groups. The Secretarial appointees do not replace elected members, but join them as voting members on the committee. Individuals serving as non-voting minority advisors are encouraged to submit a nomination form. These forms are also accepted from community-based organizations representing targeted

underserved producers. Targeted underserved voting members are appointed by the Secretary from the nominations received.

ROLE OF ADVISORS

In addition to elected or appointed members, FSA county committees may also include non-voting minority advisors. Advisors are appointed to county committees in counties or multi-county jurisdictions that have significant numbers of underserved (minority or women) producers, but lack such members on FSA county committees. Advisors play an important role by providing diverse viewpoints and by representing the interests of underserved (minorities and women) in decisions made by county committees. FSA state committees officially appoint advisors who are recommended by county committees or community-based organizations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only; other restrictions may apply. For program specifics or additional information about FSA county committees, visit a local FSA county office or the FSA county committee website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- 2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- 3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

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Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member

2017 County Committee Elections

Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Farmers and ranchers who are elected to serve on FSA county committees apply their judgment and knowledge to help with the decisions necessary to administer FSA programs in their counties, ensuring the needs of local producers are met. FSA county committees operate within official federal regulations and provide local input on:

- Income safety-net loans and payments, including setting county average yields for commodities;
- Conservation programs;
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities;
- Emergency programs; and
- Payment eligibility.

USDA encourages all eligible producers to vote or hold office as a county committee member, including beginning, established, women, African-American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Hispanic, Asian American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander producers with small or large farming and ranching operations.

VOTER REQUIREMENTS

A person who meets the requirements in No. 1 or No. 2 below, as well as No. 3 (below), is eligible to vote in the 2017 county committee elections:

1. Be of legal voting age and have an interest¹ in a farm or ranch as either:
 - An individual who meets one or more of the following:
 - o Is eligible to vote in one's own right.
 - o Is a partner of a general partnership.
 - o Is a member of a joint venture.
 - An authorized representative of a legal entity, such as:

- o A corporation, estate, trust, limited partnership or other business enterprise, excluding general partnerships and joint ventures.
- o A state, political subdivision of a state or any state agency.
Only the designated representative may cast a vote for the entity.

OR

2. Not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm.

AND

3. Participates or cooperates in any U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) program that is provided for by law.

DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

INTERPRETATION OF VOTING ELIGIBILITY FOR SPOUSES IN COMMUNITY PROPERTY STATES

In community property states, the spouse of an eligible voter is also eligible to vote.

AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBAL LANDS

Members of American Indian tribes holding agricultural land are eligible to vote in an FSA county committee election if the tribal member meets the voting requirements. For purposes of

¹ I.e. have legal documentation of ownership or tenancy of a farm or ranch, with the farm or ranch in FSA records.



County Committee Elections - 2017

OVERVIEW

Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Farmers and ranchers who are elected to serve on FSA county committees apply their judgment and knowledge to help with the decisions necessary to administer FSA programs in their counties, ensuring the needs of local producers are met. FSA county committees operate within official federal regulations and provide local input on:

- Income safety-net loans and payments, including setting county average yields for commodities;
- Conservation programs;
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities;
- Emergency programs; and
- Payment eligibility.

Every eligible agricultural producer should participate in FSA county committees elections -- whether you are a beginning or established producer, historically underserved producer, or whether you have a large or small operation -- because FSA county committees are your link with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ELECTION PERIOD

June 15, 2017 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms from the local FSA county office or obtain online at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Aug. 1, 2017 – Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA county office.

Nov. 6, 2017 – Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

Dec. 4, 2017 – Last day to return voted ballots to the FSA county office.

Jan. 1, 2018 – Newly elected county committee members take office.

WHO CAN VOTE

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the operations of an entire farm also may be eligible to vote. Members of American Indian tribes holding agricultural land are eligible to vote if voting requirements are met. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member" located at www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/county-committee-elections/index. Producers may contact their local FSA county office for more information. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

NOMINATIONS

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. In addition, organizations representing underserved (minority and women) farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates.

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. Nomination forms are filed in the FSA office that administers a producer's farm records and is available at the FSA county office or online at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

All nomination forms for the 2017 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA county office by Aug. 1, 2017.

DON'T MISS OUT ON VOTING

Ballots will be mailed to voters by Nov. 6, 2017, and must be returned to the FSA county office or postmarked by Dec. 4, 2017. Eligible voters must contact their local FSA county office before the final date if they did not receive a ballot.

FSA county committee elections, every member of an American Indian tribe is considered an agricultural landowner if the land on which the tribal member's voting eligibility is based is tribally owned, or held in trust by the United States for the tribe, even if the individual does not personally produce a crop on that land.

VOTING ELIGIBILITY

Local Administrative Areas

A county or multi-county jurisdiction served by an FSA county committee is divided into three to 11 local administrative areas (LAA). Each LAA is represented by one member on the FSA county committee. A person may only vote in one LAA (the LAA in which he or she participates or cooperates in FSA programs or programs administered by FSA).

Multiple Farm Interests in Same County or Area
Eligible voters who participate or cooperate in FSA programs on separate farms in more than one LAA in the same county or multi-county jurisdiction may only cast one ballot. Such voters must choose only one LAA in which they wish to cast their ballots.

Multi-County Jurisdictions

Eligible voters with separate farming interests in more than one county or in more than one FSA county committee jurisdiction (which may include more than one county) are eligible to vote in each election conducted for each jurisdiction's committee. Voting is limited to one LAA in which farming interests are located per each FSA county committee jurisdiction. Only one vote may be cast in each county or multi-county jurisdiction.

ELIGIBILITY TO HOLD OFFICE

To hold office as an FSA county committee member, a person must meet each of the basic eligibility requirements described below:

1. Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA.
2. Be eligible to vote in an FSA county committee election.
3. Reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate.²

4. A person must not have been:
 - Removed or disqualified from:
 - o FSA county committee membership or alternate membership, or
 - o FSA employment.
 - Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony.
 - Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

People uncertain about their eligibility to vote in the FSA county committee election should contact their local FSA office. Affirmation of eligibility to vote must be determined in order for a vote to count in an election.

During the election period, individuals not receiving a ballot in the mail may obtain a ballot directly from their FSA county office. The ballot must be cast on or before the election deadline.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about FSA county committees, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or visit a local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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- 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
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FSA-669A
(03-21-17)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency

NOMINATION FORM FOR COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION

This form allows individuals to nominate themselves or any other person as a candidate. If additional forms are needed, this one may be copied or may be obtained at the County FSA Office or obtained electronically at <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Each form submitted must be:

- A. Limited to one nominee.
 - B. Signed and dated by the nominee in Item 3. Nominee must sign if willing to have his/her name placed on the ballot and agrees to serve if elected.
- Note:** Name shown on ballot will appear exactly the same as in Agency records.
- C. Delivered to the County FSA Office or postmarked no later than August 1, 2017.
 - D. Signed and dated as a write-in candidate if elected as a member and willing to serve on the COC.

The County FSA Committee is responsible for reviewing each form to determine the eligibility of nominees. A person who is nominated on this form and is found ineligible will be so notified and have an opportunity to file a challenge.

Persons nominated should actively participate in the operation of a farm or ranch and be well qualified for committee work. A producer is eligible to be a County FSA committee member if the producer resides in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) in which the election is to be held and is eligible to vote.

This is a non-salary public service position. A small stipend is provided to offset expenses.

Federal regulations may prohibit County FSA Committee members from holding certain positions in some farm, commodity, and political organizations if such positions pose a conflict of interest with FSA duties. The positions include functional offices such as president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer; and positions on boards or executive committees. Conflict of interest restrictions also apply to employees, operators, managers, and majority owners of tobacco warehouses. Questions concerning eligibility should be directed to the County FSA Office.

The duties of County FSA Committee members include:

- A. Administering farm program activities conducted by the County FSA Office.
- B. Informing farmers of the purpose and provisions of the FSA programs.
- C. Keeping the State FSA Committee informed of LAA conditions.
- D. Monitoring changes in farm programs.
- E. Participating in county meetings as necessary.
- F. Performing other duties as assigned by the State FSA Committee.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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FSA-669A
(03-21-17)U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency

NOMINATION FORM FOR COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION

1. NAME OF NOMINEE (Type or Print Nominee's Full Name)		TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNTY FSA OFFICE	
2. ADDRESS OF NOMINEE		4. INITIALS OF EMPLOYEE RECEIVING FORM AND DATE RECEIVED	
3. NOMINEE'S CERTIFICATION: <i>I hereby agree to have my name placed on the ballot, that I will serve if elected, and if there is a conflict of interest, I will resign such position.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> I DO want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee. <input type="checkbox"/> I DO NOT want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee.		5. COUNTY	
		6. LAA	7. STATE Massachusetts
3A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE		3B. DATE	8A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINATOR
			8B. DATE
<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if nominee is a write-in candidate.		(If the individual is self nominating, no signature is required).	

9. TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE

VOLUNTARY INFORMATION FOR MONITORING PURPOSES: The following information is requested by the Federal Government in order to monitor FSA's compliance with federal laws prohibiting discrimination against program participants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, handicapped condition, or age. You are not required to furnish this information, but are encouraged to do so. This information will not be used in evaluating your nomination or to discriminate against you in any way.

ETHNICITY	RACE (Choose as many boxes as applicable)	GENDER
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM

Complete the form as follows:

- ITEM 1** Type or Print the nominee's full name. The nominee must be:
- A. Eligible to vote in the designated County FSA Committee election.
 - B. Eligible to hold the office of County FSA Committee member.
 - C. Willing to serve if elected.
- ITEM 2** Enter the nominee's current address.
- ITEM 3** The nominee must check one of the boxes to indicate a preference regarding the settling of tied votes.
- ITEMS 3A & 3B** The nominee must sign and date.
- ITEMS 8A & 8B** The nominator must sign and date. (If the individual is self nominating, no signature is required.)
- ITEM 9** Completing this item is voluntary.

ALL FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE COUNTY OFFICE OR POSTMARKED BY AUGUST 1, 2017.

NOTE: The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is 7 CFR Part 7 and the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79). The information will be used to obtain nominees for election to the County FSA Committee. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notice for County Personnel Records, USDA/FSA-6. Providing the nominee name, address, signature/date and nominator signature/date (when applicable) information is voluntary, but necessary for processing the form. Failure to furnish the nominee name, address, signature/date and nominator signature/date (when applicable) information will result in a determination of ineligibility for nomination for election to the County FSA Committee.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0560-0229. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The provisions of appropriate criminal and civil fraud, privacy, and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided. **RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.**