

Farmers and Ranchers to Choose Representation in Farm Service Agency Committee Elections

Farmers and ranchers have an opportunity to elect representation to local USDA Farm Service Agency county committees. Elections are underway in counties throughout the state. Ballots were sent to all producers in portions of each county where committee members' terms have expired. The deadline for returning the ballots to county offices is December 3, 2007.

County FSA committee elections are held annually, according to Jack M. Silzel, State Executive Director. Candidates are nominated by local farmers and ranchers. They must live in the county or local administrative area they will represent and must be eligible to vote in the county election.

FSA's relationship with producers goes back to the 1930s. At that time, Congress set up a unique system under which Federal farm programs were to be administered locally. Producers who are eligible to participate in these programs elect a three-to five-person county committee, which reviews county office operations and makes some of the decisions on how to apply the programs. This grassroots approach gives producers a much-needed say in how Federal actions affect their communities and their individual operations. After more than 70 years, it remains a cornerstone of FSA's efforts to preserve and promote American agriculture.

"County committees are extremely important since our agency implements federal farm programs that bring millions of dollars to rural communities," said Silzel.

Additional information or ballots may be requested from the local Farm Service Agency offices.

#

Chris Bieker, Outreach Coordinator
USDA Farm Service Agency
316 W. Boone, Ste 568
Spokane, WA 99201
(509) 323-3014
chris.bieker@wa.usda.gov