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Farm Service Agency

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

South Carolina Farm Service Agency Hosts Urban County Committee Informational Meetings

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COLUMBIA, S.C., May 6, 2024 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is establishing a new urban county committee (COC) in Columbia, S.C., joining 26 other cities across the country with a committee focused on delivery of USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs to urban producers. County committee members make important decisions on how federal farm programs are administered locally, and this new urban county committee in Columbia is part of USDA's broad support for urban and innovative agriculture. **FSA will host two (2) informational meetings on May 21, 2024, and May 23, 2024, for producers to learn more about the urban county committee for Columbia.**

“Producers serving on FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the Agency, and they serve as the eyes and ears for the producers who elected them,” said Laurie Funderburk, FSA State Executive Director in South Carolina. “FSA has successfully launched urban county committees in urban areas throughout the nation, and we’re excited to establish one here in Columbia to improve how we deliver critical farm loan, conservation, safety net and disaster assistance programs to urban agricultural producers.”

USDA is committed to working with farms of all sizes and in all locations, including those in urban areas, and offers a wide variety of programs and services to urban producers to help them start, expand, and improve their operations. USDA encourages all eligible producers and urban growers with farming or ranching operations to participate in county committee elections by nominating yourself or others and by voting in the local urban COC election. Like rural county committee members, urban committee members make important decisions about how FSA programs are administered locally. In addition, the Urban COC will help identify the needs of the growing urban agriculture markets as well as outreach to local stakeholders and producers about pertinent USDA programs. Urban county committees are composed of three elected members who will serve a term of up to three years.

FSA is looking for producers growing an ag product ? including but not limited to vegetables, fruits, honey, mushrooms, or flowers ? to be voters. Producers who sell or distribute ag products can run to

serve on the committee by establishing a customer record and completing a nomination form by Aug. 1, 2024. Individuals farming on their own are allowed one vote. Entities, such as non-profits, farming organizations and businesses, are entitled to one vote per entity, and they must designate who will be its voting representative.

If you or your farming organization are interested in participating on your local urban COC as a nominee or a voter, please visit fsa.usda.gov/elections for more information and resources. All interested participants must contact the [Calhoun-Richland USDA Service Center](#) to establish a new customer record.

If you are interested in learning more about the Columbia Urban County Committee, please join us at one of the informational meetings below:

May 21, 2024

11:00-12:00 p.m.

Garners Ferry Adult Activity Center, 8620 Garners Ferry Road, Hopkins, SC 29061

Virtual: Please contact Sabrenna Bryant at sabrenna.bryant@usda.gov for access information.

May 23, 2024

5:30-6:30 p.m.

FoodShare South Carolina, 201 Columbia Mall Blvd., Suite 109, Columbia, SC 29223

Virtual: Please contact Sabrenna Bryant at sabrenna.bryant@usda.gov for access information.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in these meetings should contact Sabrenna Bryant at (803) 806-3820, x.102, or dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunication relay services.

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