
USDA Announces New Farm Service Agency County Committees for Urban Agriculture, Requests Nominations

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Harrisburg, PA, August 12, 2020 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced new Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees focused exclusively on urban agriculture, including one in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. County committees have enabled farmer input on the delivery of FSA programs since the 1930s, and these new committees are part of USDA’s efforts to better support urban agriculture.

“County Committees represent farmers and set priorities at the local level, and they’re an important part of FSA in Pennsylvania,” said Gary H. Groves, FSA’s State Executive Director in Pennsylvania. “Urban and suburban farmers are uniquely qualified to identify the needs of growers and their communities, especially when it comes to making fresh, healthy food accessible.”

The committees are organized through USDA’s Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, and the first five will be located in:

- Philadelphia, Pa
- Albuquerque, N.M.
- Cleveland, Ohio
- Portland, Ore.
- Richmond, Va.

Five additional county committees will be announced in the fall.

The urban and suburban county committees will work to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production practices. Additionally, the new county committees may address areas such as food access, community engagement, support of local activities to promote and encourage community compost, and food waste reduction.

Committees will make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. Their input is vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment, and other agricultural issues.

“I encourage urban growers to nominate candidates to lead, serve, and represent their community on their county committee,” Gary H. Groves said. “Diverse representation can ensure the needs of all farmers – including urban and suburban farmers – are included in local decisions for USDA programs.”

Nominations for Urban County Committees

FSA will begin accepting nominations for urban and suburban county committee members on Sept. 8. Urban farmers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program in the county selected may either be nominated or may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Organizations, including those representing beginning, women, and minority producers, also may nominate candidates.

To be considered, a producer must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections or farmers.gov/urban. All nomination forms for the urban and suburban county committees must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Oct. 2.

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Oct. 23.

More Information

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members serve on FSA county committees. The committees consist of three to 11 members, who serve three-year terms, and typically meet once a month.

Find out more by contacting the FSA county office at the local USDA Service Center. General questions about these FSA county committees can be sent to UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov.

A webinar to discuss the work of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production – including these FSA county committees -- will be held on Aug. 27 at 2:00 Eastern Time. For the link and information on registration, see farmers.gov/urban.

The 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to form the urban county committees as well as make other advancements related to urban agriculture. The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It is led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and works in partnership with numerous USDA agencies that support urban agriculture. Its mission is to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural practices, including community composting and food waste reduction. More information is available at farmers.gov/urban.

Additional resources that may be of interest to urban agriculture entities include [AMS grants](#) to improve domestic and international opportunities for U.S. growers and producers and [FSA loans](#).

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