

Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections Open This Week?

News Release | California | November 09, 2022

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December 5 is the Last Day to Return Ballots

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) began mailing ballots this week for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) [county and urban county committee elections](#) to all eligible agricultural producers and private landowners across the country. Elections are occurring in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these committee members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. Producers and landowners must return ballots to their local FSA county office or have their ballots be postmarked by Dec. 5, 2022, in order for those ballots to be counted. ? ? ? ?

“County committees provide an opportunity for producers to play a meaningful role in delivering farm programs, but in order for county committees to be effective, they must truly represent all who are producing,” said Blong Xiong, state executive director for FSA in California. “Voting in these elections is your opportunity to help ensure our county committees in California reflect the diversity of our agriculture. Your voice and vote matter, don’t miss your chance to cast your ballot.” ? ?

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits. Additionally, producers who are not of legal voting age but supervise and conduct farming operations for an entire farm are eligible to vote in these elections. ? ?

Each committee has from three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms, and at least one seat representing an LAA is up for election each year. Ballots must be in the mail or delivered in person by close of business Dec. 5, 2022, to be counted. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2023. ? ? ? ?

Producers can find out if their LAA is up for election and if they are eligible to vote by contacting their local FSA county office. Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot in the mail can request one from

their local FSA county office. Visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local USDA Service Center and fsa.usda.gov/elections for more information. ? ? ?

Urban and Suburban County Committees?? ?

The 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to establish county committees specifically focused on urban agriculture. ? ?

Urban committee members are nominated and elected to serve by local urban producers in the same jurisdiction. Urban county committee members will provide outreach to ensure urban producers understand USDA programs and serve as the voice of other urban producers and assist in program implementation that support the needs of the growing urban community.?????

Urban and suburban county committees in the following cities will hold elections this year: Phoenix, Atlanta, New Orleans, Minneapolis-St. Paul, St. Louis, Albuquerque, Cleveland, Portland, Philadelphia, Dallas, and Richmond. These elections will serve local urban producers in the same jurisdiction. A fact sheet on the urban county committee election and a list of eligible cities can be found at fsa.usda.gov/elections.??

Over the summer, USDA [announced six new urban county committees](#) in Chicago, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Los Angeles, New York City, and Oakland. The nomination period for these locations began Oct. 21 and will end on Dec. 2, 2022. Elections will be held from Jan. 3 through Jan. 31, 2023. Learn more at farmers.gov/urban.??

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