



# NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • FARM SERVICE AGENCY

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Farm Service Agency

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### FARM SERVICE AGENCY COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS BEGIN TODAY

(Jackson, MS), Nov. 6, 2009 – Michael R. Sullivan, Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency in Mississippi announced that the 2009 FSA county committee elections start today as ballots are being mailed to eligible voters. Dec. 7, 2009, is the deadline for eligible voters to return ballots to their local FSA offices.

"The FSA county committee system is unique among government agencies, because it allows producers to make important decisions concerning the local administration of federal farm programs," said Sullivan. "I urge all eligible farmers and ranchers, especially minorities and women, to get involved and make a real difference in their communities by voting in this year's elections."

Committee members apply their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on disaster and conservation payments, establishment of allotments and yields, producer appeals, employing FSA county executive directors and other local issues. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in FSA programs. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm, can also vote. Agricultural producers in each county submitted candidate names during the nomination period held last summer.

Eligible voters who do not receive ballots in the coming week can obtain ballots at their local USDA Service Center. Dec. 7, 2009, is the last day for voters to submit ballots in person to local USDA Service Centers. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than Dec. 7th. Newly elected committee members and alternates take office Jan. 1, 2010.

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Close to 8,000 FSA county committee members meet monthly at more than 2,300 FSA offices nationwide. Each committee consists of three to five members who serve three-year terms. Approximately one-third of county committee seats are up for election annually.

For more information about FSA county committees and FSA programs, visit:  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

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