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USDA DIRECTOR URGES FARMERS TO PARTICIPATE IN FSA COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

JACKSON, MS- July 14, 2009 – USDA Farm Service Agency State Executive Director Michael R. Sullivan urges the state's farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers to submit a nomination in FSA's county committee elections by August 3rd, the deadline for submitting nomination forms.

"FSA county committees provide producers with the opportunity to help implement federal farm programs in their communities," said Sullivan. "It is vital that all farmers and ranchers, especially women and minorities, participate in the elections process to ensure the opinions expressed in committee meetings reflect an area's agricultural sector. In recent years, the Department has seen a trend of increased nominations of minority and women producers and I hope that will continue."

FSA county committees help administer federal farm programs at the local level. FSA county committee members make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other important agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms. Nationwide, there are about 7,800 farmers and ranchers serving on FSA county committees. Committees consist of three to 11 members who are elected by eligible producers.

Producers may nominate themselves or others, and organizations representing minorities and women may also nominate candidates. To become a candidate, an eligible individual must sign the nomination form, FSA-669A. The form and other valuable information about FSA county committee elections are available online at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>. Nomination forms for the 2009 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 3, 2009.

Contact the local USDA Service Center for detailed information.