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- [FSA County Committee Elections to Begin; Producers to Receive Ballots Week of Nov. 7](#)

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 3, 2016 – Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Val Dolcini today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin mailing ballots to eligible farmers and ranchers across the country for the 2016 FSA County Committee elections on Monday, Nov. 7, 2016. Producers must return ballots to their local FSA offices by Dec. 5, 2016, to ensure that their vote is counted.

“Producers elected to FSA county committees play a vital role in local agricultural decisions,” said Dolcini. “Their contributions are essential to the daily operation of nearly 2,200 offices across the country. It is a valued partnership that helps us better understand the needs of the farmers and ranchers we serve.”

Nearly 7,700 FSA County Committee members serve FSA offices nationwide. Each committee has three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms of office. One-third of county committee seats are up for election each year. County committee members apply their knowledge and judgment to help FSA make important decisions on its commodity support programs, conservation programs, indemnity and disaster programs, and emergency programs and eligibility.

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. Approximately 1.5 million producers are currently eligible to vote. Farmers and ranchers who supervise and conduct the farming operations of an entire farm, but are not of legal voting age, also may be eligible to vote.

Farmers and ranchers will begin receiving their ballots the week of Nov. 7. Ballots include the names of candidates running for the local committee election. FSA has modified the ballot, making it easily identifiable and less likely to be overlooked. Voters who do not receive ballots in the coming week can pick one up at their local FSA offices. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than Dec. 5, 2016. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2017.

For more information, visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. You may also contact your local USDA Service Center or FSA office. Visit <http://offices.usda.gov> to find an FSA office near you.

USDA works to strengthen and support American agriculture, an industry that supports one in 11 American jobs, provides American consumers with more than 80 percent of the food we consume, ensures that Americans spend less of their paychecks at the grocery store than most people in other countries, and supports markets for homegrown renewable energy and materials. Since 2009, USDA has provided \$5.6 billion in disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; expanded risk management tools with products like Whole Farm Revenue Protection; and helped farm businesses grow with \$36 billion in farm credit. The Department has engaged its resources to support a strong next generation of farmers and ranchers by improving access to land and capital; building new markets and market opportunities; and extending new conservation opportunities. USDA has developed new markets for rural-made products, including more than 2,700 biobased products through USDA's BioPreferred program; and invested \$64 billion in infrastructure and community facilities to help improve the quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/results.

Questions?

Please contact your local [FSA Office](#).

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