



National Association of Farmer Elected Committees

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**Policy Recommendations to the
Obama-Biden Presidential Transition Team
On behalf of the
The National Association of Farmer Elected Committees
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Erosion of FSA County Committee Authority

The legacy and history of the Farm Service Agency is that it is one of the most democratic agencies in the federal government. This fact is due in no small part to system established by the Franklin Roosevelt Administration which to this day requires farmers in most counties to nominate and elect actual farmers to serve on the FSA County Office Committee (COC). These farmer nominated and elected committees have, for over seven decades, selected and hired COC staff and made critical decisions on farm program, conservation, farm credit and disaster programs.

Over the past decade, FSA COCs have experienced an accelerated erosion of their authority to facilitate FSA programs from the grassroots' level. There has been a continual shift from the COC to the FSA District Directors and the FSA State offices, including;

- Approval of FSA County Executive Director (CED) appraisals,
- Approval of FSA COC staff time and attendance,
- Supervision of FSA COC staff,
- Centralization of farm program, farm loan and administrative payments,
- Leasing authority, which has now been transferred to the National Office?

Any and all of these issues has slowed and complicated all county FSA processes dramatically and further complicated the process of program delivery. These sorts of centralization of procedure have been tried in the past and have always been found to be much less efficient.

NAFEC respectfully requests that FSA County Committee authorities be reestablished in order to ensure local supervision and administration of FSA COC employees and FSA programs.