



We hope this fall newsletter finds each of you either in full swing of harvest or ready to begin your fall harvest. Its always a great time of year for farmers across the country. As for our cattle producers, the entire year has been a rewarding one, with record prices.

Over the past few months your NAFEC team have been busy working for our COC system and trying to do all we could to protect our county office employees. We traveled to Washington, DC back in May to meet with administrative staff from Secretary Rollins office and the office of FSA Administrator, Bill Beam. We then traveled to Whitefish, Montana for our annual meeting in late July. We have had many visits with the Administration, both USDA and the FSA about the situations in our offices. NAFEC will continue working hard to advocate for the COC system and to ensure our local offices have the staffing needed to administer the Farm Bill.

Within the pages of this newsletter you will find the following:

- A new letter written from NAFEC to our agriculture organizations regarding the county officer delivery system.
- NAFEC's written comments to the Secretary of Agriculture regarding USDA reorganization.
- A legislative update from David Senter
- A summary of our 2025-26 elected NAFEC Officers & Directors
- A COC/NAFEC board member spotlight
- 2025 NAFEC/Dillard's Scholarship winner announcement
- A benefit update from Dillard Financial Solutions Inc.

Sincerely,

Jin Zenling

Jim Zumbrink NAFEC President







National Association of Farmer Elected Committees

Representing Farm Service Agency County Committee Members since 1965

July 23, 2025

Dear Agriculture Friends:

We, the National Association of Farmer Elected Committees (NAFEC), that represents all Farm Service Agency County Committees who are responsible for the delivery of Farm Programs, are writing to all of the major agriculture and commodity organizations on behalf of the Farm Service Agency and our local USDA service centers. With the recent passage of the Title 1 farm programs in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, your FSA county office staffs and committees will be very busy over the next year, working to help ensure the United States maintains the strongest agriculture sector of any nation in the world. Whether it is delivering disaster funds to hurricane or drought victims, forage loss payments to livestock producers, or emergency conservation funds to repair damaged farmland, our staff has remained committed to you, our American farmers and ranchers. That is why this letter is of critical importance to all of you.

With recent buyouts and early retirements, the staffing levels in our counties has never been lower. Already at a breaking point, we are now faced with having to develop base acres on over 36 million new acres, as well as maintain all of the Title 1 programs that ensure a strong Farm Safety net. Frankly, we need your help if we are to be able to deliver the farm programs in the fast and efficient manner our producers have come to expect and deserve.

Recent visits to Capitol Hill made by our NAFEC officers have made it clear the only path to increase our staffing levels is through the 2026 Agriculture appropriations process. We urge your group to contact the Appropriation Committees for both the House and the Senate, as well as both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees and let them know FSA is at a breaking point. Without staffing increases, critical services will be impacted.

We appreciate your service to American Agriculture and stand ready to assist each of your members to the fullest and most effective extent of the law with the resources we have.

If NAFEC can provide more information or assistance please let us know.

Sincerely,

Jim Zumlung

Jim Zumbrink, President - Ohio, on behalf of the NAFEC Executive Committee

Craig Turner, Executive Vice President – Texas
Jim Densberger, Vice President – Nebraska
Bob Braden, Secretary Treasurer – Iowa
Ronnie Wagoner, Northeast Area Director – Massachusetts
Stuart Fitzgerald, Southeast Area Director – Florida
Theresa Whitney, Southwest Area Director – New Mexico
Dan Noteboom, Northwest Area Director – Washington
Waylon Smolinski, Midwest Area Director – Michigan
Cole Sims, At Large Director – Louisiana





National Association of Farmer Elected Committees

Representing Farm Service Agency County Committee Members since 1965

August 20, 2025

Dear Secretary Rollins:

On behalf of the National Association of Farmer Elected Committees (NAFEC), who represents over 8,000 farmer elected committee members and advisors throughout the nation, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the USDA Reorganization Plan.

NAFEC certainly shares the Administration's goal to cut waste, fraud and abuse from any and all government programs and support an effective and efficient government among all departments and agencies. However, while many government departments and agencies have increased employees over the past few years, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) who service our farmers and ranchers on a daily basis, has been a shrinking agency for many years. Statistics from USDA indicates that since 2002, FSA permanent county office staffing has gone from 9,413 employees to less than 6,000 employees, a 40% decline. With a mission area critical to Americans farming and ranching sector, our current staffing levels are at an all-time low. We are concerned that these reductions in staffing have left many offices without the necessary employee resources to adequately deliver the programs approved by Congress. As such, NAFEC is very concerned that without adequate staff our farmers and ranchers could experience great delays in the receipt of program funds, conservation funds and emergency funds. With rural America on the verge of financial crises due to low commodity prices, the failure to timely deliver program funds could have a long and lasting impact on all of America. As a result, we urge USDA to:

- 1. Maintain adequate staffing levels in our local USDA Service Centers, especially our front-line county office staff of the Farm Service Agency.
- 2. Protect our county office employees USDA's workforce is its greatest asset. Employees who have committed their careers and their lives to USDA should be treated with both respect and appreciation as we navigate any reorganization plan.
- 3. Provide NAFEC a seat at the table during any future reorganization plans of the Farm Service Agency. With a presence in every county in the nation, with membership in Farm Bureau, Farmers Union and every commodity and livestock organization in America, our members have a very diverse and unbiased input to offer the Administration, which no other single agricultural organization can offer.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments and look forward to working with the Administration in the future.

Sincerely,

Craig Turner, Executive Vice President – Texas Jim Densberger, Vice President – Nebraska

Bob Braden, Secretary Treasurer - Iowa

Jim Zumlung

Ronnie Wagoner, Northeast Area Director – Massachusetts

Stuart Fitzgerald, Southeast Area Director -Florida

Theresa Whitney, Southwest Area Director -New Mexico

Dan Noteboom, Northwest Area Director - Washington

Waylon Smolinski, Midwest Area Director – Michigan

Cole Sims, At Large Director – Louisiana



The County Committee System of FSA: True Democracy at the grassroots level in the People's Department



Legislative Report

NAFEC continues to work for County Committees by supporting adequate staffing in our local FSA offices. In a letter to Secretary Rollins, NAFEC raised concerns about not having proper staffing and how that will affect service to producers. This letter was picked up by Agri-Pulse, a large national Farm Publication and now the reporter is working on a follow up article about Farmer Elected County Committees and why they are important to our producers. NAFEC is also asking questions about USDA reorganization plan and asking to be included in any plans that will impact local FSA offices.

Congress is back from their August break and now have a lot on their plates to debate and reach agreement on before October 1st. A government funding bill will have to be agreed to prevent a shutdown. Both the House Agriculture and Senate Agriculture Committees plan to work on what they are calling Farm Bill 2.0 which will include everything that was not allowed in the Reconciliation Bill with no assurance from House or Senate Leadership for Floor time to take up a Farm Bill. With Congressional gridlock continuing I don't know how they can get everything done. I believe that Congress will kick the can down the road a couple of times with a Continuing Resolution then in November or December will do a CR to cover the rest of 2026. I also think that an extension of the old 2018 Farm Bill will be included, amended by what's in the Reconciliation Bill. That way authority to continue CRP and other important programs will still be in place.

Senate Majority Leader Thune has said he's open to considering emergency farm assistance. With the stress across farm country, and with next year being election year, Members of Congress will be wanting to get help to farmers with the current low prices and lagging export sales which is going to mean many farmers will lose money this year. USDA is estimating Net Farm Income this year will be negative.

NAFEC believes that local control through Farmer Elected Committees is why FSA can deliver program benefits in a fair and balanced way and do it for less dollars than other agencies. If a County Committee has questions are need advice, NAFEC is here to work with you to find a solution.

David Senter NAFEC Legislative Consultant



2025-2026 NAFEC Officers & Directors

Over the past year we have seen a continued growth within our NAFEC organizational structure as we have added several new state directors. We want to introduce and recognize these new state directors and our 2025 – 2026 officers for NAFEC:

New State Directors:

Maryland: Arthur Paul Eaton III (Chip) eatonfarms04@yahoo.com (410) 924-7220

Michigan: Waylon Smolinski saxysmo@gmail.com (989) 766-3530

Oklahoma: Director Frankie Allen frankiesphotosag@gmail.com (580) 920-5616

Oklahoma: Alt. Director Vidal Rodriquez vidalrodriguez61961@gmail.com (580) 513-0875

Re-elected Officers:

President, Jim Zumbrink, Ohio, - <u>jimzumbrink@gmail.com(937)</u> 423-8507 Executive Vice President, Craig Turner, Texas - <u>turner_and_turner@yahoo.com</u> (806) 269-0610 Vice President, Jim Densberger, Nebraska - <u>densbergerfarms@aol.com(402)</u> 429-4111 Secretary/Treasurer – Bob Braden, Iowa - <u>robertwbraden@gmail.com(563)</u> 320-2061

Re-elected Area Directors:

SEA Director: Stuart Fitzgerald, Florida <u>stuartcattlellc@yahoo.com</u> (863) 206-5021 NWA Director: Dan Noteboom, Washington - <u>noteboom51@gmail.com</u> (360) 815-2874

At Large Director: Cole Sims, Louisiana farmercole@msn.com (318) 282-9951

Newly elected Area Directors:

NEA Director: Ronnie Wagner, Massachusetts <u>ronnienafec@gmail.com</u> (413) 374-1448 SWA Director:Teresa Whitney, New Mexico <u>treewhitney@gmail.com</u> (575) 420-0015 MWA Director: Waylon Smolinski, Michigan <u>saxysmo@gmail.com</u> (989) 766-3530

Newly elected Alternate Area Directors:

SEA Alternate: Lance Ham, FL <u>lanceham69@gmail.com</u>(813) 478-9335

MWA Alternate: Dennis Kuhlengel, Illinois <u>dkuhlengel@hotmail.com</u>(618) 967-0667 NWA Alternate: Larry Olsen, South Dakota <u>larryeolsen@yahoo.com</u> (605) 359-8955 SWA Alternate: Frankie Allen, Oklahoma <u>frankiesphotosag@gmail.com</u> (580) 920-5616 NEA Alternate: Arthur Paul Eaton III (Chip) <u>eatonfarms04@yahoo.com</u> (410) 924-7220 At Large Alternate: Danny Pillsbury, Vermont <u>ipills1019@aol.com</u>(802) 373-3198

We want to thank all of these individuals who have agreed to serve NAFEC. Your roles within the organization are extremely important as we continue our fight to maintain the elected county committee system of government and the support of American Agriculture.

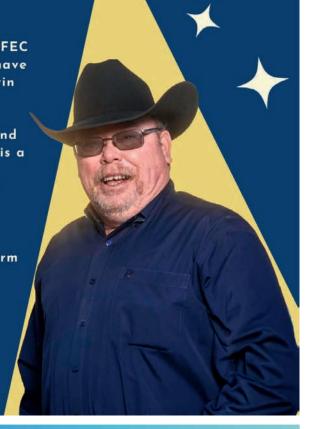
Leadership Spotlight

Our COC member spotlight for this newsletter is Craig Turner, currently the Executive Vice President of NAFEC and a former NAFEC President. Craig and his wife Cathey live in Matador Texas. They have two adult daughters Cassidy and Carley. Cassidy and husband Kevin Langer brought them their first grandson Kayden.

Craig is both a farmer and rancher, raising cattle, wheat, cotton and hay. He also has his hand in a wild game processing business and is a local volunteer fireman. Craig and Cathey are members of the Roaring Springs Church of Christ and he says his favorite pastime working with youth in ag and "family time".

Craig Turner epitomizes a perfect NAFEC officer. His passion for NAFEC the past twenty-five years is well known throughout the Farm Service Agency. Whether it is advising local committees on how to handle appeal issues or going to Washington DC on behalf of NAFEC, Craig is NAFEC through and through!

Thank you Craig Tuner for all you have done for the County Committee system of government, the Farm Service Agency and the National Association of Farmer Elected Committees.



NAFEC 2025 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Rachel Ehlers- Walcott, Iowa
NAFEC Member- Angie Ehlers, COC Member in Scott County Iowa

Dear NAFEC,

I am a senior at Davenport West High school. Some activities I have been involved in include: Falcon Friends, 4-H, 4-H County Council, Volleyball, Track, Senior Class Officers, Future Business Leaders of America and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. After high school, I plan to attend Iowa State University to study Accounting with hopes to become a CPA. I appreciate receiving the NAFEC Scholarship to help reach my goals.

Thank you, Rachel





National Association of FSA County Office Employees

September 1, 2025

President

Kayla Mattson kayla.mattson@nascoe.org

Vice President Christa Kraatz christa.kraatz@nascoe.org

Secretary Taylor Stucki

Taylor Stucki taylor.stucki@nascoe.org

Treasurer
Jessi Colgrove
jessi.colgrove@nascoe.org

Greetings NAFEC Members!

I am honored to be writing my first article for your newsletter as the NASCOE President. Our leadership team is in place and actively working with energy, integrity, and a deep commitment to our mission.

For those who may not know me, I currently serve as a CED in a multi-county shared management operation in North Central Minnesota. This operation oversees six counties, comprised of four offices and two COCs (with a total of 14 COC members). Over nearly 17 years, I've had the privilege of serving NASCOE in various roles at the state, area, and national levels.

As President, my goals are simple and focused:

- Empower County Office Staff
- Strengthen Communication
- Grow Leadership and Membership

At our recent Organizational Meeting, I asked each member of the NASCOE leadership team to review our roles and responsibilities handbook. This exercise served as a reminder that it is an expectation for all of us to actively promote and support the COC system, while also staying vigilant to any efforts that may diminish the critical role of COC members in FSA's mission.

We also discussed the long-standing partnership between NASCOE and NAFEC. I want to stress how important it is for NASCOE members to support NAFEC and encouraged all to join as associate members. As FSA employees, NASCOE's advocacy has limits—there are things we cannot say or do directly. That's why NAFEC's role is so vital. Together, we are stronger in advancing and protecting the COC system.

Within NASCOE, our County Office Advocacy Committee (COAC), chaired by Brian Gould, works closely with NAFEC to support county office employees and strengthen the COC structure. Their priorities for the year include:

- 1. Identifying areas where COAC can support county office employees in administrative and personnel management.
- 2. Researching and developing a "NASCOE Grievance Board" educational brochure for county office employees and COC members.
- 3. Expanding training to ensure COC members and CEDs fully understand their roles and responsibilities within the COC/COF structure.
- 4. Assisting NAFEC's recruitment efforts to fill vacant state director positions and continuing to educate members about the NAFEC mission.
- Supporting NAFEC's social media growth by encouraging NASCOE and COC members to follow the National Association of Farmer Elected Committees Facebook page.









6. Identifying and addressing necessary handbook corrections to keep the COC system strong, consistent, and accurately represented, while reminding leadership of NASCOE's role and importance.

There is much work ahead, and while uncertainty exists, I am confident that the NASCOE team—with NAFEC's partnership—will continue to meet every challenge in the best interests of our members and the producers we serve.

It is encouraging that the Secretary of Agriculture consistently recognizes the vital role of County Office Employees nationwide. In recent testimony before Congress, both she and congressional members highlighted the value of our work. However, there are still misconceptions. Some suggest FSA is adequately staffed because we were able to quickly disburse ECAP, ELRP, and SDRP funds. What isn't being said is that this success came only because employees and COC members worked tirelessly, often setting aside other pressing work that remains unfinished. States are still adjusting office hours and moving staff to cover gaps, proving again that our workforce is stretched too thin.

NASCOE will continue working with NAFEC, COAC, and our Legislative Team to advocate for increased staffing and proper appropriations. We are hopeful that the Reorganization Plan will remain focused on national office-level changes without undermining the structure of local county offices. Appropriations remain a critical issue, and while Congress debates and refines its bills, NASCOE will stay vigilant. We are especially watchful of attempts to weaken protections against office closures. For now, those protections remain in place, but we are prepared to respond if needed.

I am excited to continue working with each of you. My leadership approach may differ from past years, but I ask for your support and openness. The challenges ahead are real, but I have full confidence in our NASCOE team. While I may serve as President, my voice carries meaning only because of the strength and unity of our members and leaders.

As NAFEC members, I encourage you to share your concerns with your leadership so they can be brought forward to our COAC team and Executive Committee. Together, we can strengthen FSA, NASCOE, and NAFEC—for the benefit of employees, committees, members, and the producers we proudly serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Kayla Mattson

NASCOE President









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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

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NAFEC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (For New or Renewing Members)

Member Information	
Name	Spouse Name
Address	Home Phone
City	Mobile Phone
State Zip	Email
Employer	FSA County Office
Member Signature	Date MM / DD / YYYY
Select Your Membership Type: New Membership OR Renewal Membership	
County Committee Member	LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP
CIRCLE ONE PAYMENT OPTION ONLY	ONE-TIME PAYMENT
Pay in Full Now \$50 ANNUALLY Deduct from Payroll OR PER MEETING	\$250.00
Associate Member	FOR PAYMENTS IN FULL OR 444 FORMS Mail your check and completed NAFEC Membership Application to: NAFEC c/o Tammy Eibey 1597 220 Street Manchester, IA 52057
CIRCLE ONE PAYMENT OPTION ONLY	
Pay in Full Now \$20 ANNUALLY Deduct from Payroll PER PAY PERIOD	

Membership begins after completed application and dues are recieved and processed.

For questions concerning this application, email Tammy Eibey.

tammyeibey@gmail.com