

Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement

MEMBERSHIP BALANCE PLAN

1. Committee's Official Designation

The Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee").

2. Authority

The Committee was originally established pursuant to Section 5(b) of the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992, 7 U.S.C. 1929 reauthorized under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, and is established and managed in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. App. 10.

3. Objectives and Scope of Activities

The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Secretary on issues related to beginning farmers and ranchers, including existing or proposed policy and programs and ongoing program administration.

4. Points of View Needed for the Committee

The Committee needs to include organizations and individuals who work with and or represent beginning farmers and ranchers: farmers, ranchers, lenders, National Institute of Food and Agriculture and Farm Service Agency representatives, not-for-profit organizations, and higher education institutions.

The Committee needs to represent a variety of viewpoints on a wide range of agricultural interests in order to achieve a balanced representation to effectively address USDA beginning farmers and ranchers' policy issues under consideration. The Committee should include persons with demonstrated professional or personal qualifications and experience relevant to the functions and tasks to be performed.

Historically, the committee consisted of 20 members with approximately one-third farmers/ranchers, one-third government and academic, and one-third representing farm credit. These goals allow enough flexibility to select with

respect to geographical and demographic diversity as well as professional affiliation.

5. Other Balance Factors

Equal opportunity practices in accordance with USDA policies will be followed in all appointments to the Committee. To ensure that the recommendations of the Committee consider the needs of the diverse groups served by USDA, membership will include, to the extent possible, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.

The USDA prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, gender identity (including gender expression), veteran status, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

6. Quorum Requirements

There will be a quorum when half the Committee members plus one is present and at least 20 percent of those present are farmers or ranchers.

7. Candidate Identification Process

Candidates identify themselves by responding to a notice that USDA publishes in the Federal Register. Candidates may also be nominated by peers in the industry, local elected officials, stakeholders, current and former committee members. USDA support staff conducts outreach, especially to traditionally underrepresented groups and regions of the United States, to ensure broad awareness of the opportunity to participate and to help foster a cadre of nominees who represent a balanced cross-section of U.S. agriculture.

Candidates apply to the Secretary of USDA through the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement and are initially screened and identified for vetting by the office. The USDA White House Liaison's office vetting process includes a background check to determine if any of the candidates have a conflict of interest that would prohibit them from serving on the Committee due to criminal or ethical violations.

The USDA Secretary appoints Committee members.

8. Subcommittee Balance

The Chairperson and the Designated Federal Official may jointly appoint such subcommittees as they deem necessary to carry out the functions of the ACBFR. All subcommittees, whether formal or informal, shall report back to the full ACBFR, and shall not directly provide advice to USDA.

9. Other -

N/A

10. Date Prepared or Updated

March 19, 2023