



March 24, 2015

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FSA SUPPORT EMPLOYEES

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## MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

NASE strives to:

- *promote the betterment of the Farm Service Agency through improved service to the public*
- *Improve our programs*
- *Establish a cooperative relationship at all levels of the Agency*
- *Help accomplish the mission of USDA and FSA*
- *Improve support staff effectiveness*
- *Improve morale, esprit-de-corp, and efficiency*
- *Promote self-motivation, self-education, and career enhancement*
- *Promote the social, economic, civic and personal welfare of support employees*

Farm Service Agency's Administrator has invited members of the National Association of Support Employees (NASE) to attend a spring conference with other association groups. For two hours we will sit with other association groups to hear what the administration wants to tell us all. Then, NASE officers and committee persons will be meeting one-on-one for more than two days with different groups of the agency's administration and program staffs to listen to our comments, discuss our concerns, and answer our questions.

We have heard from some of you and have a list of comments, concerns and questions, but we want to hear from more of you. We will be discussing budget, staffing, support staff grades, different program issues, automation and communication, just to name a few general topics. While we have some specific items, please do not hesitate to let us know what you would like us to bring to the table. If something doesn't fit into one of the general topics, feel free to suggest another. Additionally, remember, if you have a suggestion to improve something, do not hesitate to include that as well.

PLEASE, let us hear from you with anything you would like us to bring forward. You can email or call any of the officers or me, your zone representative, with anything you may have. (When you email, please put "WDC issue" in the subject line, along with the subject. This will help us organize the information.)

Thank you for allowing me to serve as President for 2014-2015.



Wear **red** on Fridays to show support for our troops at home and abroad.

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## 2014-2015 NASE Board

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NASE officers, zone representatives and committee persons will be meeting with the administrator, members of his administrative staff, and program staffs for both farm loans and farm programs. We will also be meeting with staff from the department on things (comments, concerns, and questions) on issues we have already heard from all of you. In order to make sure we ask all the right questions and get answers for you.

One of the first people we will be meeting with is Lilia McFarland with the Office of the Secretary. Ms. McFarland contacted me several weeks ago. She is involved with the Beginning Farmer Initiative but has talked about a taskforce and/or working group of new/young employees to garner ideas about the future of FSA from the employee perspective. She is interested in knowing what we can do to get and maintain these employees so that FSA has a solid future.

The agenda for the meeting is as follows -

#### Wednesday, April 1:

8:30 – 10:30 am – Joint Employee Association meeting, Jefferson Auditorium

10:30 – 11:15 am – Lilia McFarlan, [Beginning Farmer Initiative](#), Room 4090-S

11:15 – 12:00 pm - Lunch

12:00 – 1:00 pm, Mark Rucker, DAM, Room 4090-S

1:00 – 2:00 pm – Mike Schmidt, DAFP, Room 4090-S

2:00 – 3:00 pm – Heidi Ware, OBF, Room 4090-S

3:00 – 3:30 pm – Chris Nelson/Jamie Edmunds, OSEC, Room 4090-S

3:30 – 4:30 pm – Val Dolcini, Administrator/Chris Beyerhelm, Associate ADM, Room 4090-S

4:30 – 6:00 pm – Loretta Burns, ITSD, Room 4090-S

#### Thursday, April 2:

8:00 – 9:00 am – Angela Coln & Staff, Forms, Graphics, and Records Section Management; Twila Hawkins and Staff, Management Analysis and Directives, Room 4090-S

9:00 – 10:00 am – Karis Gutter, OSEC, Veterans Affairs Liaison, Room 4090-S

10:00 – 11:00 am – Jonathan Alboum/Tonye Gross, MIDAS Program Executive, Room 4090-S

11:00 – 12:00 pm – Rob Haughton, Director, Emergency Preparedness Division, Room 4090-S

12:00 – 1:00 pm - Lunch

1:00 – 4:00 pm - Acting DAFLP and Division Directors, Loan Making, Loan Servicing and PDEED, Room 4090-S

4:00 -5:00 pm, Greg Diephouse, DAFO & Staff, Room 4090-S

In addition to these two days of scheduled meetings, we will be meeting with FLP staff regarding the delegation of authority exhibit in 1-FLP with our ideas for revisions to the exhibit.

Also scheduled is an overview and some one-on-one tutoring on USDA Connect.

Not all zone representatives are able to attend the meeting but we have arranged to alternate or substitute zone representatives that will be gathering information and making sure it gets back to all of you.

Additionally, we are able to have at least one person from each of the NASE committees attend.

**Cathy Rakes**  
Nebraska  
Farm Loan  
Committee

Farm Loan Committee Member – Jill Monson (California)

Jill, who is also the Zone A Representative, will represent the farm loan program committee in Washington. If you have issues on farm loans that you would like us to address, please do not hesitate to send them to your zone representative or to Jill at [jill.monson@ca.usda.gov](mailto:jill.monson@ca.usda.gov).

**Jill Uffelman**  
Montana  
Farm Program  
Committee

Farm Program Committee Chairperson - Jill Uffelman (Montana)

Jill will be listening carefully to items involving the various farm programs. Her current programs are NAP, Livestock Disaster Programs (LIP, LFP, ELAP), but please do not hesitate to let her know about other program issues also. Jill can be reached at [jill.uffelman@mt.usda.gov](mailto:jill.uffelman@mt.usda.gov).

**Tanya McIlravey**  
South Dakota  
Information  
Technology  
Committee

IT Committee Chairperson - Tanya McIlravey (South Dakota)

Tanya will be in-tuned to all automation and information technology issues and is quite adept at asking the right questions so that we can hopefully get the right answers for all of you have questions, concerns or comments about these things. Tanya works both farm loans and farm programs and can be reached at [tanya.mcilravey@sd.usda.gov](mailto:tanya.mcilravey@sd.usda.gov).

**Carol Truman,**  
Personnel  
Committee

Personnel Committee Chairperson, Carol Truman (Pennsylvania)

Carol Truman will be attending as the Zone C representative and another member of the committee, Chrissy Frank (Montana) will be attending. Either one will represent NASE well on personnel issues. While in the National Office we hope to have the opportunity to discuss program technician grades with the administration. Carol's email is [carol.truman@pa.usda.gov](mailto:carol.truman@pa.usda.gov).

**ISSUES,  
COMMENTS,  
CONCERNS OR  
QUESTIONS  
ENCOURAGED.**

**This is your opportunity!!**

Having been involved in NASE for more than a few years, I am aware of many concerns that our membership faces. I am not however a mind reader and as of yet, I have failed to find that skill in any of our officers. They are all very forward thinking and skilled people that truly care about FSA and not only their futures with FSA but yours as well.

If you have any comments, concerns, or questions you would like us to bring up, PLEASE do not hesitate to contact anyone of these folks and express your issues. We really want to, and will, represent all of you during our visit.

If you do not know any of these folks and are hesitant to contact them, find one you do know that will forward your concerns to us. Your state association president, zone representatives that may not be able to attend or even your co-worker that signed you up for NASE should be willing to forward on any concerns you have.

NOT ONLY THAT, since NASE is known as the nice group, we like to go prepared with things that we can thank the administration for. If you have some good comments that we can pass on. Please let us know that as well.