

Farm Service Agency California – State Committee

The Obama Administration announced the individuals who will serve on the California Farm Service Agency State Committee. The State Committee members will oversee the activities of the agency, including carrying out the state agricultural conservation programs, resolving appeals from the agriculture community and helping to keep producers informed about FSA programs.

"These individuals will work with USDA to help farmers and ranchers build and maintain successful operations that produce the safe, nutritious food supply that America needs while spurring economic development in our nation's rural communities," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "They bring the experience and passion necessary to help continue the Obama Administration's efforts to rebuild and revitalize rural America."

The individuals appointed to serve on this committee include:

Ronald Kelley (Chairperson)

Kelley, from Sacramento County, Calif., has operated R. Kelley Farms, a 50 acre "u-pick" operation in the Sacramento Delta, since 1994. Kelley specializes in summer fruits and vegetables. He is also a Seed Division Manager for The Lyman Group, Inc., where he focuses on wholesale seed clients.

Reis Soares

Soares, from Madera County, Calif., emigrated from the Azores Islands to California in 1962. In 1984, she and her husband started their own dairy farm, which is located in Chowchilla, California. Soares has served as the Minority Advisor for the Madera County FSA Committee since 1999.

Michael Honig

Honig, from Napa County, Calif., is the President and Managing Partner of Honig Vineyard & Winery. Honig chaired the first California initiative to develop a "Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Practices," a voluntary program establishing statewide guidelines for sustainable farming and winemaking.

Pete Navarro

Navarro, was born and raised in Watsonville, Calif. He currently operates Navarro Farms, a strawberry operation founded by his father and uncle who began as farm laborers from Mexico. Navarro is a member of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau and a former member of the California Strawberry Commission.

Judy VanWingerden

Van Wingerden is currently president of the Carpinteria Valley Water district board, president of the Santa Barbara County Flower and Nursery Grower's Association, treasurer of the California Cut Flower Commission and serves on the 19th District Agricultural Board. She grows cut flowers and avocados in Carpinteria and Nipomo.

USDA's Farm Service Agency works to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural Americans. Some of the agency's efforts include facilitating income support, disaster assistance and conservation programs, providing operating loans for the procurement of farm equipment, seed and fertilizer, as well as offering ownership loans to help new and veteran

producers purchase a farm. FSA also works to procure various commodities to benefit low income families through domestic food assistance programs.

The USDA provides leadership on food, agriculture and natural resources and touches the life of every American. Reflecting President Obama's commitment to expanding economic opportunities in rural America, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and the USDA are working to enhance availability of broadband, promote the development of renewable energy, to conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment, and promote a sustainable, safe, sufficient and nutritious food supply.

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(July 27, 2011)