

2025 NACS Convention Newsletter



NACS was founded in 1973 and is a professional organization of USDA-Farm Service Agency employees working to support rural America. Our mission is to expand, improve and expedite USDA services, providing better delivery of Farm Loan Programs to farmers and ranchers around the United States.



2025 NACS National Convention

The 2025 NACS National Convention was held in Louisville, Kentucky, on July 13th-17th, at The Brown Hotel. The Brown Hotel was built over 100 years ago and offered gorgeous meeting rooms, spacious hotel rooms and is the birthplace of the Hot Brown.

This year's National Convention was another success! Members received updates from Leadership, as well as, heard about upcoming changes that will help streamline Farm Loan Programs. Due to poor weather conditions in Washington DC, not all of the National Office speakers were able to attend convention in person, but they were still able to present virtually.

The Convention Committee did a wonderful job planning and organizing this year's convention. Maureen Mausbach announced the committee was already working on finding a location for the 2026 National Convention. She explained the process for choosing a convention site and the obstacles the committee has to work around when planning convention. The Convention Committee will be sending a survey to membership asking for preferences, suggestions and feedback for future National Conventions.

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Employee Association Representatives

On the first day of General Assembly, the employee associations were well represented. In attendance was Kayla Mattson, NASCOE President; Keith Hiser, NADD President; Warren Whitaker, FLCA Representative; Kaiti Steckman, NACS President; and Tamee Renwick, NASE President. The representatives, from NASCOE, NADD, and FLCA, each gave a brief history of their years of service with the agency, an overview of their association's goals, for both the employees and producers, and their association's concerns with the current and potentially upcoming changes being made with USDA-FSA.

L to R: Kayla Mattson, NASCOE President; Tamee Renwick, NASE President; Kaiti Steckman, NACS President; Keith Hiser, NADD President; and Warren Whitaker, FLCA Representative.



L to R: Tamee Renwick, NASE President; Robin Kleiman, NACS; Debra Schlieff, NACS; Bryna Ferrara, NASE; Sarah Kinnamon, NACS; Angela Reid, NACS; and Kaiti Steckman, NACS President.



THE WUNDER FUND

NACS maintains an endowment fund that is named for the vision of Bruce Wunder. The Wunder Fund is used to support members who are attending their first annual NACS convention. While at convention, you will often hear the phrase "Feed the Pig". Members can "Feed the Pig" by giving a donation to help build the Wunder Fund.

At the 2025 National Convention, NACS members contributed \$635 to help support the first-time attendees. **THANK YOU** to membership for your generous contributions and please remember you can "Feed the Pig" at both your Zone Meeting and at National Convention.

First-Time Attendees

NACS and NASE First-Time Attendees were honored during General Assembly on the first day of convention. A First-Time Attendee is a NACS or NASE member who is attending their first National Convention. A meeting, for the First-Time Attendees, was held on Sunday. During this meeting, the NACS President gave an overview of convention by discussing the agenda for each day; including explaining the Committee Meeting and the Zone Meeting breakout sessions. She also explained the Wunder Fund and how First-Time Attendees can receive a reimbursement to help offset costs for attending convention. One lucky winner will also receive an additional reimbursement from our Sponsor Dillards Financial..

Sponsors of the 2025 NACS/NASE/NADD Convention



Dillard Financial, Blue Cross Blue Shield, FEDS Protection, Moody's Analytics, and National Rural Lenders Association

A huge **THANK YOU** to our wonderful sponsors! Convention would not be possible without the generosity of our sponsors. In addition to their donations, they provide great information and are very helpful with answering any questions asked at convention. We always enjoy visiting their booths during our meeting breaks and greatly appreciate the time they take to attend our convention!

Brooke Appleton, Deputy Under Secretary for FPAC

We had the opportunity to hear from leadership on both Monday and Tuesday of convention. Monday started with Deputy Under Secretary for FPAC, Brooke Appleton, via TEAMS. Ms. Appleton began her presentation by thanking everyone for the work we do and recognizing the tremendous effort that Farm Loan Staff has made with loan obligations. She then briefly discussed Reorganization Plans, Staffing and Hiring, and DOGE.

Reorganization Plans

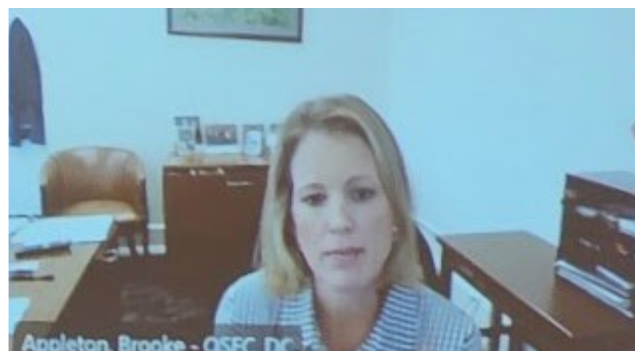
- Reallocation efforts are underway as their goal is bring FSA work-force closer to the producers we serve.
- Office closures and leases are being reviewed very carefully and leadership is aware of the importance of keeping the needed FSA offices opened.
- Future updates will be provided soon.

Staffing and Hiring

- USDA hired thousands of employees without a feasible plan to maintain them.
- Did not want to compromise the integrity of the Agency, which is why some DRP requests were denied in some locations.
- Realizes there are challenges but Modernizing IT Systems is an important initiative. Would like to take the paperwork burden off the producers.

DOGE

- USDA and DOGE are looking for inefficiencies. DOGE reviews are primarily being completed in one day and have not caused delays with loan processing.



Bill Beam, FSA Administrator

Bill Beam, FSA Administrator, spoke at convention on Tuesday. Unfortunately, Mr. Beam and Steve Peterson's flight was cancelled on Monday, due to bad weather in Washington DC. They were unable to attend convention in person but they were able to join via TEAMS. Mr. Beam thanked everyone for all the work we do and explained how important Farm Loan Programs are to him. He received a FLP loan, in the 1980s, and ever since that time, farm loans have played a critical role in his life. He stated, without the FLP loan, he probably would not be a farmer today. Mr. Beam also spoke on DRP and his top three priorities for FSA.

- Maryland and Texas needed additional help with processing loan applications because they were understaffed primarily due to DRP. Mr. Beam thanked the other states who have helped Maryland and Texas with the processing of their loan applications.
- Recognized DRP caused understaff issues in some locations and that DRP could have been administered differently.
- Top Three Priorities

1. Streamlining Farm Loan Programs

A. There will be 19 Administrative Changes released over the next several weeks. These changes will help reduce some burdens on both staff and producers and 250,000 staff hours will be saved annually.

2. Improve Acreage Reporting

A. The goal is to modernize the acreage reporting process to make it more efficient. He mentioned using Precision Ag data to help with this process.

3. Delivery of Supplemental Disaster Assistance

A. SDRP, ECAP, and ELRP.



Steve Peterson, Associate Administrator

Steve Peterson, Associate Administrator, apologized for their flight issues and not being able to be in person for his presentation. Mr. Peterson has 39 years with the agency and farmed with his Dad until 2016. He is very passionate about the work we do as we help keep farmers in business. Mr. Peterson showed a PowerPoint Presentation that discussed and compared the FY 25 Enacted Budget and the FY 26 President's Proposed Budget.



- Discussed the two funding sources for FSA and explained there were reductions in other parts of the FY 25 Enacted Budget to offset the increase for costs associated with rent, the 2% pay raise, PT Reclassification, and adding the Deputy SED positions. The agency absorbed a total increase of \$83.8M for these costs.
- Continuing with the FY 25 Enacted Budget, the Operating Cost reductions, from FY 24 funding levels, total \$34.5M. This includes a reduction in funding for Cooperative Agreements, Operating Expenses (Contracts, Travel, Supplies, Etc.), and IT.
- The FY 26 President's Proposed Budget reflects an overall reduction of \$372.1M from the FY 25 Enacted Budget levels. This includes a total reduction of \$328.6M in Salaries & Expenses and a total reduction of \$43.5M in FSA Programs.

1. Salaries & Expenses include a \$200M reduction for staffing and a \$128.6M reduction in Operating Costs. Operating Costs include Rent, Operating Expenses, and IT.

2. FSA Programs include a \$22.2M reduction in ACIF Farm Loan Programs Subsidy Costs, a \$4.2M reduction in PLCE funds, a \$6.5M reduction in State Mediation Grants, a \$7M reduction in Grassroots Source Water Program, and a \$3.5M reduction in Transportation Cost Payment Program for Geographically Disadvantaged.

Jamie White, Acting DAFP

Jamie White, Acting DAFP, was also unable to attend convention in person but gave her presentation via TEAMS. She discussed the strains on program staff due to CRP sign-up and crop reporting. They are working on streamlining Disaster Recovery Programs and a second wave of Emergency Livestock Relief is coming in August. This Emergency Livestock Relief will be different than the first wave because data collection will be required. Ms. White also gave several updates that are included in the One Big Beautiful Bill.

Highlights from One Big Beautiful Bill

- 2025 ARC/PLC update to price loss reference price
- Software Development to help producers receive higher of the ARC or PLC option
- Base acre update coming for 2026 - 30 million acres to be added and the 2019-2023 history will be used to calculate the average
- Payment Limitation going up to \$155,000 (previously was \$125,000)
- Dairy Margin Coverage- update milking average to highest year between 2021-2023



Trina Brake, DAFO

Trina Brake, DAFO, expressed her appreciation for being invited to attend the convention. She also expressed her support and commitment for all of the associations. Ms. Brake has 35 years with the agency and started her career with the Farmers Home Administration. She stated our insight and feedback is important to DAFO and she acknowledged the outstanding work we do for the farmers and ranchers. Ms. Brake also extended her thanks to everyone for welcoming all USDA employees into our offices across the country.

- Discussed several tools they have created and some tools they are continuing to build. One tool that has been created is used to assist states with redrawing district lines.
- As we close out FY 25, we are operating under a full year continuing resolution and the state allotments have been provided.
- Priority spending is on mission critical needs. Travel is still considered mission critical specifically for overnight travel. Local travel is allowed. If overnight travel is needed, states need to document why it's mission critical. As an example a Manager's meeting could be conducted virtually, so it would not be considered mission critical.
- There is a purchase card holder in every state now. DAFO created a Power Ap for making purchases with the purchase card.
- HR processes have been on hold since January. Promotions are being processed now and reassignments are allowed in the county offices to cover staffing shortages. No state office reassignments are allowed at this time. The hiring freeze is extended through Oct 15th but DAFO has requested an exemption for internal hires.
- They are looking at ways to be more efficient to decrease the workload for District Directors.
- FSA significantly increased the number of loan analysts. The number of Loan Analysts is now at 82.2% and it was 34.3% last year.
- FY 25 performance appraisals will be conducted manually. OPM is going back to a 5 tier system for FY 26.
- Overtime has been authorized for ERP and LRP.
- 35 SEDs are currently onboard and 15 more will be onboarded by the end of August.
- Thank You to the associations for being pilots for the new Microsoft Bookings system. This system will make it easier for producers and offices to make appointments. Microsoft Bookings will be rolled out later this year.
- Encouraged everyone to log into Tableau to see all the tools that are available. Information provided is from 2012 to present.



L to R: Ryan Lukassen—Acting Assistant to DAFLP/Chief Product Officer, Houston Bruck—DAFLP, and Trina Brake—DAFO

Houston Bruck, DAFLP and Ryan Lukassen, Acting Assistant to DAFLP/Chief Product Officer

Houston Bruck, DAFLP and Ryan Lukassen, Acting Assistant to DAFLP/Chief Product Officer, were very thankful to everyone for making the time to attend convention as they understand the importance of the associations. They jointly provided a PowerPoint presentation that discussed different Farm Loan topics and provided a list of future updates.

- Industry Overview
 1. Net Income has seen a 20% decline from 2024 levels.
 2. Corn/beans/wheat/cotton are trading below 5-year average.
 3. Cattle/hog/broiler prices appear strong going into 2026.
- Funding
 1. In FY 25, dollar demand was substantially higher than the same period in FY 24. However, should be able to fund all loans for the rest of the FY.
 2. Should not enter FY 26 with a backlog.
 3. Direct Delinquency Rate is 1.5% which is less than 10% of the borrowers. The Delinquency Rate has remained relatively stable this FY.
 4. Guaranteed Delinquency Rate is 0.6% which is less than 2% of the borrowers. The Delinquency Rate has remained relatively stable this FY.
- AFT
 1. Action is needed to continue AFT beyond the end of 2025 and the plan is to continue AFT.
 2. The first delinquency data is available and it is showing nothing shocking.
- 80% of the Texas and Maryland loans are processed to the point of decision.
- Additional Legislative Proposed Items
 1. PLP Express is an expedited processing for certain guaranteed loan applications in exchange for a lower percentage of guarantee.
 2. Bona Fide Operator are changes to owner/operator rules to accommodate more entity scenarios and to help facilitate easier generational transition.
 3. Direct FO Preapproval is a pilot program to explore alternative eligibility requirements to facilitate pre-qualification.
- 19 Administrative Changes-Streamlining Internal Controls 2.0
 1. Reduction of CQR Requirement-Only 2 passing dockets needed
 2. District Director Management Reviews- Semi-Annually instead of Quarterly
 3. Elimination of Service Center Reviews- CQRs will suffice
 4. NATS Vendor Management- National office will now coordinate and manage all tasks related to vendor management in NATS
 5. Administrative Appraisal Reviews-Simplified review form with minimal narrative entry
 6. Simplified Farm Assessment-Only 3 narrative fields required on Farm Assessment tab in FBP
 7. Amortization Tool- Same flexible repayment terms are available, but use of the tool is optional

Houston Bruck, DAFLP and Ryan Lukassen, Acting Assistant to DAFLP/Chief Product Officer—Continued

- 19 Administrative Changes-Streamlining Internal Controls 2.0—Continued
 - 8. Personal Property Security-Equipment no longer considered practicable to separate
 - 9. Streamlined OLs-Microloans eligible for streamlining
 - 10. Test for Credit-Direct Loans which don't qualify for AFT will generally meet test for credit automatically.
 - 11. Guaranteed Loans Made in Conjunction with Direct Loans- Separate write-up for guaranteed loan not required if made in conjunction with a direct down payment loan or direct participation loan
 - 12. Conditional Commitment-More consistent guidance around acceptable conditions
 - 13. Guaranteed Loan Security-Clearer, more concise guidance around additional security and junior liens
 - 14. Operational Review/Security Inspection Reduction in Frequency
 - 15. Inventory of Debt Instruments-Required in first year after closing, only required every 3 years thereafter.
 - 16. DSA/DBSA Notification-Switching to electronic distribution rather than paper
 - 17. Estimated Loss Claims-No "Deep Dive" until final loss claim regardless of lender status
 - 18. Reduced Lender File Reviews
 - 19. Standardized Template for Guaranteed Loan Subordinations
- Updates on FLEX/Modernization/Replacement of PLAS
 - 1. FLEX= Farm Loan Experience- Reduce down to one system that we work in every day
 - 2. They are working with a MVP (Minimally Viable Product)-Testing to start within a week.
 - 3. Hope to be off PLAS by end of 2026
- Release 1.0 to replace Penny Bot & 90 Day Past Due Notifications
- Release 1.1- FLEX MVP- Loan on the Books- Anticipated by End of CY2025
 - 1. Application Origination
 - 2. Eligibility
 - 3. Loan Decision
 - 4. Loan Closing
 - 5. Loan Obligation
 - 6. Disbursement of funds



Libby Foley from McAllister & Quinn

NACS Legislative Consultant

The third day of convention is when membership is provided a Legislative Briefing from the Chairperson of the Legislative Committee, Newton Gilman, and our legislative consultant, Libby Foley from McAllister & Quinn.

- 2026 Budget
 1. President Trump requested cut of salaries down to \$950 million
 2. House and Senate proposals include 1.1-1.2 billion
 3. Congress is working to mark up and finalize the 2026 budget; work on 2027 budget to begin March/April
- Farm Bill will need to be reintroduced in Congress
- M&Q/NACS Legislative Priorities
 1. Repeal of direct term limits – Might be difficult to accomplish with current political parties in control
 2. Address current loan limits for direct and guaranteed loans
 3. Direct Hiring Authority for FSA
 4. FSA Pay Parity & Possible Grade Increases
 5. Union & Association Payroll Deductions – Executive Order to prohibit payroll deductions for dues.
 - A. Union Dues Protected
 - B. Association Dues not Protected – Associations need a contingency plan
- FEHB Audit will be happening to make sure everyone on the insurance is eligible
- McAllister & Quinn Activities
 1. April 2025 performed Hill Visits alongside NACS Legislative Committee Members
 - A. House Ag Appropriations Sub Committee – Majority
 - B. Senate Ag Appropriations Sub Committee – Majority & Minority
 - C. Senator Deb Fisher
 - D. Representative Andrew Clyde
- Reorganization Plan – Held very tightly by Administration – House & Senate do not have answers either.
- Ag Round Table has quarterly calls with the most recent being in June 2025 with members being:
 1. ICBA – Independent Community Bankers Association
 2. ABA – American Bankers Association
 3. NRLA – National Rural Lenders Association
 4. Sustainable Ag
 5. Young Farmers
 6. Farm Credit Association



NACS Annual Meeting

After the Legislative briefing, the NACS Annual Meeting is reconvened. There is a roll call of chapters present, in which each chapter confirms the number of delegates and alternates that are present at the convention. They then tell an interesting fact about their state. NACS Board Members provide a brief report regarding the position they hold and state where their report can be found in the Annual Report. Past presidents, that are in attendance at the National Convention, are recognized and then the convention attendance roll call is started.

The convention attendance roll call is a fun way to see how long members have been attending the National

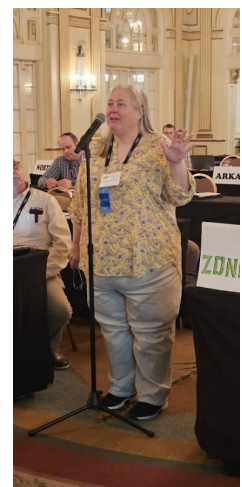
Conventions. They start with the current convention and then name the convention sites from the most recent to the oldest. Members then sit down when the location of their first convention is called.



The Committee Reports are then presented. During this portion of the meeting, changes can be made to either amend or move a resolution to non-adopt and members can bring new resolutions to the floor for discussion.

Members have the chance to debate with each other why they feel the proposed action does or does not need to take place. Once all discussion is completed, then the membership votes. Only the resolutions that are adopted are sent to the National Office for consideration.

The final order of business, during the Annual Meeting, is the election of officers. The officers, for the next year, are elected by the membership that is in attendance.



REMEMBER TO SUBMIT YOUR RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions are the Association's way of identifying issues and proposing solutions. The resolution process begins with each NACS member and is the backbone of existence for NACS. Each member is encouraged to submit issues and solutions that they identify in their work environment for appropriate consideration by the Association. Items of an urgent nature that require immediate NACS attention should be brought to the attention of the NACS Board.

Resolutions may be submitted online at the NACS web site or in writing at State Association, Zone, or National Convention meetings.

Ray Turknett Blood, Sweat and Tears Award

The Past President has the honor of presenting the Ray Turknett Blood, Sweat and Tears Award to a member based on the recipient's service to NACS and its members. This award is named in honor of our founding and then longest serving President. It is considered the most prestigious award presented by NACS. This year's Blood, Sweat and Tears recipient was Juanita Ballman from KY. Juanita began her career with Farmers Home Administration, on a part-time basis, while she was still attending college, and once she graduated, she became a full-time employee. Juanita has attended several Zone Meetings and NACS National Conventions over the years. She also served on numerous committees and task forces on behalf of NACS. She is always willing to go above and beyond and was a great help with recruiting new members to join NACS. She was also known as the Mom and snack/treat lady of the KY convention group. If any NACS member was ever hungry, Juanita was always there ready to give them a sweet or salty snack. With 36 years of service, Juanita retired from FSA this past March. However, even in retirement, Juanita continued to be a friend to NACS, as she hosted the Hospitality Room during convention. She made all of the delicious food and kept the food and beverages very well stocked throughout the week. She did a wonderful job as host and we are so glad she was selected this year's award recipient. **Congratulations Juanita!!!**



Juanita Ballman and NACS Past President Brandon Waldron

2025-2026 NACS BOARD



L to R: Zone C Representative – Vicky Swift, Secretary – Crystal Zwilling, Vice-President – Jeremy Burner, President – Dustin Mattingly, Past President – Kaiti Steckman, Treasurer – Tiffany Grody, Zone B Representative – Callie Erickson. Not Pictured: Zone A Representative – Amy Larson and Zone D Representative – Sara Harris.

Meet the New NACS President

I am your 2025-2026 NACS President, Dustin Mattingly. I am a Farm Loan Manager in Shelbyville, KY. My wife Jessica and I have three children; Landon (14), Lily (9) and Lilah (8). I grew up on a livestock, hay and tobacco farm. Most of my childhood was spent in a milk parlor or on an Allis Chalmers tractor. I have 21 aunts and uncles, most of whom had farms of their own. Now we have a small operation of beef cattle and hay operation where we live on 26 acres in Lebanon, KY. You will more than likely find me on a soccer field coaching my two daughters' competitive soccer team, the theater watching my son perform or traveling around watching gymnastics.

Family and Agriculture are two things I hold dear. When I took this job, my purpose was to serve the farmers of Kentucky and I have been blessed to do so. I look forward to meeting and getting to know many NACS members over the next year. If you ever need anything at all, always feel free to contact me.

