

Farming

USDA employees may engage in farming activities. However, given the overall mission of USDA, employees must remain sensitive to avoiding even a perception of impropriety while engaging in farming activities.

USDA employees may not actively participate in meetings and functions concerned with the establishment of farm organizations or with recruiting members for existing organizations.

Following procedures established for the general public, USDA employees may participate in any Department farm program.

REFERENCE - 5 CFR Part 8301.103 Additional rules for employees of the Farm Service Agency.

- (a) **Application.** This section applies only to Farm Service Agency (FSA) personnel who are Federal employees within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 2105. This section does not apply to FSA community committee members, county committee members, and county office personnel, who are either elected to their positions or are employees of community or county committees established under 16 U.S.C. 590h. For rules applicable to FSA community committee members, county committee members, and county office personnel, see 7 CFR part 7.
- (b) **Definition of FSA program participant.** For purposes of this section, the phrase "FSA program participant," includes any person who is, or is an applicant to become, an FSA borrower, FSA grantee, or recipient of any other form of FSA financial assistance available under any farm credit, payment or other program administered by FSA.
- (c) **Prohibited real estate purchases.**
 - (1) No FSA employee, or spouse or minor child of an FSA employee, may directly or indirectly purchase real estate held in the FSA inventory, for sale under forfeiture to FSA, or from an FSA program participant.
 - (2) **Waiver.** A request for an exception to the prohibition found in paragraph (c)(1) of this section may be submitted jointly by the FSA program participant and FSA employee (whether on his or her own behalf, or on behalf the employee's spouse or minor child), to the FSA State Executive Director. The FSA State Executive Director may grant a written waiver from this prohibition based on a determination made with the advice and clearance of the DAEO and the FSA headquarters ethics advisor that the waiver is not inconsistent with part 2635 of this title nor 7 U.S.C. 1986 nor otherwise prohibited by law and that, under the particular circumstances, application of the prohibition is not necessary to avoid the appearance of misuse of position or loss of impartiality or otherwise to ensure confidence in the impartiality and objectivity with which agency programs are administered. A waiver under this paragraph may impose appropriate conditions, such as requiring execution of a written disqualification.

(d) Prohibited transactions with FSA program participants.

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (d)(2) of this section, no FSA employee or spouse or minor child of an FSA employee may directly or indirectly: sell real property to; lease real property to or from; sell to, lease to or from, or purchase personal property from; or employ for compensation a person whom the FSA employee knows or reasonably should know is an FSA program participant directly affected by decisions of the particular FSA office in which the FSA employee serves.

(2) Exceptions. Paragraph (d)(1) of this section does not apply to:

(i) A sale, lease, or purchase of personal property, if it involves:

(A) Goods available to the general public at posted prices that are customary and usual within the community; or

(B) Property obtained pursuant to public auction; or

(ii) Transactions listed in (d)(1) of this section determined in advance by the appropriate FSA State Executive Director, after consulting with the FSA Headquarters ethics advisor, to be consistent with part 2635 of this title and otherwise not prohibited by law.

(e) **Additional prior approval requirements for outside employment.** Any FSA employee not otherwise required to obtain approval for outside employment under § 8301.102 shall obtain written approval in accordance with the procedures and standards set forth in paragraphs (c) and (d) of § 8301.102 before engaging in outside employment, as that term is defined by paragraph (b) of § 8301.102, with or for a person:

(1) Whom the FSA employee knows, or reasonably should know, is an FSA program participant; and

(2) Who is directly affected by decisions made by the particular FSA office in which the FSA employee serves.