



## National Association of FSA County Office Employees County Office Advocacy Committee

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### 2023 National Convention Exit Report College Station, TX August 1-5, 2023

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Howdy once again and WOW what an Aggie-AWESOME convention we have just experienced in College Station, Texas! A BIG Texas size thank you to TASCOE for hosting this year in a truly wonderful location. Another word of thanks goes out to Madam President Marcinda Kester, who put her faith in me to finish out her year in NASCOE. It has been a real learning experience for me, and one I will treasure in my career. It has been a whirlwind but very rewarding to meet new faces, see old friends while working towards the common goal for our COC's, employees and NASCOE.

Reflecting back on these short 8 months that I have served as your County Office Advocacy Committee (COAC) Chair, I have seen the challenges that COAC, NASCOE, FSA employees, COC members and NAFEC have faced right along with the farmers and ranchers that we serve in our counties. It is a true statement to say that we are survivors and we have certainly persevered as folks in agriculture just do! It does not go without saying another note of gratitude goes out to the following leaders that have helped me in this role:

- NEA Chair - Barbie Parsons
- MWA Chair - Katrina Miller
- SWA Chair - Samuel Montoya
- Kevin Dale, National Marketing Director for NAFEC Assistant
- Donny Green, SEA Exec and COAC Founder
- Morgan Limmer, FSA District Director #13; and former COAC Chair
- Macy Logan, TASCOE Director #13 (assisted with COAC Logo)
- NWA Chair - Jill Lorang
- SEA Chair - Charla Brannon

The County Office Advocacy Committee held two enlightening and productive breakout session, with 9 strong in attendance at the first session and 20 stronger in attendance at the second session. We were honored to have the NAFEC officers, directors and members (12 NAFEC in total) in our 2<sup>nd</sup> session with information shared from several of them as well as Kevin Dale enlightening those in attendance on NAFEC's involvement and importance working alongside NASCOE and COAC.

Items discussed from sessions were: Educating our employees/COC's with suggestions of a COAC Newsletter; COAC/NAFEC touch card with importance of COC; SEDs to emphasize information going out to every COC on NAFEC and COAC; NAFEC offered to set up TEAMS meetings to discuss benefits and educate COC's during their monthly/quarterly meetings as NAFEC is the COC's legal representation and it can be discussed during their COC meeting times. Also Cole Sims, NAFEC, suggested a NAFEC+COAC training video to educate that was more personal with interviews from COC, NAFEC and COAC to share to all states. A list of NAFEC POC was suggested to be sent out for all states to know their contacts.

COC Orientation Trainings need to go back to face-to-face meetings that are uniform from state to state and where NAFEC can be invited to attend and share the benefits in order to assure that COCs are ALL getting educated on what NAFEC has to offer and how to be involved with NAFEC and COAC. Equity Commission was also briefly discussed with its importance and how we can stay informed on what is happening with regards to the Commission. Another topic was strengthening the NAFEC membership by obtaining NAFEC Directors in each and every state plus recruiting more associate members to NAFEC for just \$1 per PP or a one-time \$200 lifetime membership. COAC will continue its mission with NAFEC in promoting membership and the COC system. If you or your COC members are not NAFEC members, I, along with all NAFEC represented at the convention, urge you to complete an associate member application and talk to your COC members about the importance of NAFEC and their benefits they offer once a member.

Also discussed was the unveiling of the new COAC branding mark/logo emblem for educational purposes in hopes that it will bring a better awareness of what COAC represents for all – COMMUNICATION, COOPERATION, COLLABORATION and COMMUNITY.



COAC

COC = COAC = NAFEC = NASCOE = YOU!

Make this synonymous when you hear or see one you think of all of us joining forces together as a TEAM!

Additional COAC goals, suggestions, and ideas were also discussed:

- Increase communication with NAFEC officers, consultants, STOs and COF staffs. Education to employees is the key to educate COC members, farmers, and ranchers!
- Continue to work closely with the Legislative Committee and our NASCOE Legislative consultant with NAFEC also monitoring the Equity Commission developments.
- Ensure COC's are trained properly and fully understand the significance of their responsibilities as COC members to their COF employees, STO and the farmers and ranchers they serve. Allow PT's to be in the COC meetings annually during the COC trainings for their input and education. It was encouraged to have NAFEC packets with a new Fact sheet, NAFEC newsletter and any additional information sent out to all CEDs or to all COF's for COC's to review earlier than January as some COCs act on their Organizational Meetings after the COC December elections if the COC members remain the same for that county. Normally this information is received in January each year and sometimes it is after the COCs first meetings of the year.
- Encourage Area Chairs to invite a state chair from their area to participate in COAC and to fill those states that do not currently have a COAC Chairs serving in their association. This would give all states a COAC chairs and have direct contact with their state COAC Chair, their COC members and NAFEC state directors as well.

- \* COAC and/or NAFEC emblem to be placed on the USDA-FSA COC Elections pamphlets that are in each and every County Office (COFs) nationwide for education and awareness.
- Stay diligent in working with NAFEC on their assistance in calling attention to the National Office on updating verbiage and charts in handbooks so that the COC system are represented accurately and effectively. Thank you to NAFEC, Kevin and David for your work started with Donny Green and fortunately COAC and NAFEC were able to carry that forward in hopes to be corrected in future HB amendments.

As we move forward into the future, COAC should be synonymous with the COC acronym, as well as NAFEC in all COFs. The members in attendance felt the passion and enthusiasm as well as enjoyed the southern hospitality that Texas certainly provided for the convention. All involved felt that being together again was so needed to build and rebuild relationships; and encourage new ideas as we share success stories from NAFEC, COAC and NASCOE.

It has truly been an honor and a blessing to serve as your NASCOE COAC Chair. Thank you for this opportunity and I am looking forward to our future as we to continue the growth and the eagerness to build a stronger COAC, NAFEC and NASCOE.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Jeannine P. Wendel*  
NASCOE COAC Chair

*P.S.*

I wanted to leave you with these inspirations since I did not get to share them at convention:

COMMITTED VS. INTERESTED

When you're committed you find a way  
When you're interested you find an excuse.  
When you're committed you do what it takes.  
When you're interested you do what's convenient.  
When you're committed you do it consistently.  
When you're interested you do it occasionally.  
When you're committed you take accountability.  
When you're interested you point fingers and shift blame.

WHICH ARE YOU? COMMITTED OR INTERESTED!

*Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible. ~ St. Francis of Assisi*

*In life, be the type of person that leaves a mark... Not a scar! ~ Unknown*