Alabama Farmers Federation Women's Program

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Farmers Federation women's programs in Alabama at both the state and county level is to provide an opportunity for women to actively participate in the policymaking and policy execution activities of the Alabama Farmers Federation. Recognizing those activities particularly suited to the talents of women, Farmers Federation women are encouraged to have a major part in the overall Farmers Federation program.

ROLE

The women's program is organizationally structured as an "arm of the Board" and acts as a liaison between the board and the membership in helping implement policies and programs of the organization.

All projects and programs of the women shall have administrative requirements equal to all other Farmers Federation programs including the approval of the Farmers Federation Board, whether at the county or state level.

FUNCTIONS OF THE WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

The Farmers Federation is a family organization where men and women work together to develop and implement the policies as set forth by the member; therefore, the functions of the women's program are:

- To stimulate the interest and enthusiasm of Farmers Federation women in the organization of its programs thereby materially assisting with developing and carrying out of policies.
- To plan projects and activities that will provide opportunities for women to participate and become involved in the entire Farmers Federation program.
- To provide information and education whereby Farmers Federation women can attain the knowledge to help solve the problems of farmers through their organization.
- To surface and develop the leadership potential for the Farmers Federation, especially trying to involve the younger members.
- To provide one of the channels of communication to the respective board of directors from the membership, thereby giving the "women's point of view."

American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee

Guidelines of the American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee State Eligibility for Nomination:

Alabama Farmers Federation Women may be nominated to AFB Women's Leadership Committee when:

- The State Farm Bureau they represent has a Women's Leadership Committee
- The State Farm Bureau has assigned staff to service the program.
- The nominee is a voting member in good standing of her state and/or county Farm Bureau (AFBF clarified and said this means that anyone who runs should be a Alabama Farmers Federation member, does not require being a County Board Member)
- The nominee is a member of her state women's leadership committee in a regular or created ex-Officio capacity and must remain so during her term(s) on the AFB Women's Leadership Committee.
- The nominee has attended at least one American Farm Bureau Annual Meeting and served a voting delegate to the Southern Region Women's Caucus.
- The nominee has attended the AFBF Communications Boot Camp.

Any county member who wishes to run for the AFBF Women's Leadership Committee must have the approval and support of their county President and the Alabama Farmers Federation President and will notify the State Women's Leadership Division Director at least 14 months before they plan to run for the position to have ample time to prepare, campaign and hold elections during the Alabama Annual Meeting Women's Caucuses, if necessary.

STATE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Alabama Farmers Federation women's program is structured for the purpose of uniting all the active Farmers Federation women membership for a coordinated course of action in specific Farmers Federation policy execution endeavors.

A. Basis of Selection

The State Women's Leadership Committee shall be comprised of two members from four regions in the state and one member selected at large. The regions are as follows:

1. NORTH

Blount, Cherokee, Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Etowah, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan, and Winston counties.

2. NORTH CENTRAL

Autauga, Bibb, Calhoun, Chilton, Clay, Cleburne, Fayette, Greene, Jefferson, Lamar, Pickens, Randolph, Shelby, St. Clair, Talladega, Tuscaloosa and Walker counties.

3. SOUTHWEST

Baldwin, Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas, Escambia, Hale, Lowndes, Marengo, Mobile, Monroe, Montgomery, Perry, Sumter, Washington, and Wilcox counties

4. SOUTHEAST

Barbour, Bullock, Chambers, Coffee, Coosa, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Elmore, Geneva, Henry, Houston, Lee, Macon, Pike, Russell, and Tallapoosa counties

B. Qualifications

Each new State Women's Leadership Committee member must come from a county with an active county women's committee and be active within that committee and be a member of a farm family.

C. Elections

The State Women's Leadership Committee shall be comprised of two members from each of the four regions in the state and one member selected at large.

1. Representatives will caucus by districts to select a nominee for election to the state committee.

2. Delegates eligible to vote at each district caucus will be: the chairman of the county Farmers Federation women's committees OR a duly authorized alternate elected by the county Farmers Federation Board.

3. In the event that neither the chairman nor alternate can attend, the county Farmers Federation Board of Directors shall appoint an alternate to represent the county Farmers Federation women at the women's district caucus or any similar meeting.

4. Nominees for the State Women's Leadership Committee must come from a county with an active county women's committee and be active within that committee and be a member of a farm family.

5. The list of nominees as approved by the representative body of women shall be submitted to the president of the Alabama Farmers Federation.

D. Terms of Service

1. Each member of the committee shall be elected for a three-year term with the option of a second consecutive term if re-elected by the women voting delegates.

2. Eligibility after the second term is reestablished after an absence of one year from the committee.

3. A committee member will resign from the state women's leadership committee if that member misses two consecutive regularly scheduled meetings within a calendar year unless she has an excusable absence. An alternate member will immediately be chosen from that region.

4. The president of the Alabama Farmers Federation shall request by letter, nominations from the region where the vacancy exists. The letter of nomination must come from the county president in the region where the vacancy exists and must reach the president's desk on or before the specified date in the letter the Alabama Farmers Federation president sent to the county presidents.

5. If an alternate is appointed to serve on the State Women's Leadership Committee on or before July 1 of the second year in the term of the vacated seat, then such appointment will constitute a full term for the alternate receiving the appointment. IF a seat becomes vacant for any reason on or before July 1 in the second year of term of that seat and the president of the Alabama Farmers Federation requests nominations and none are submitted before the deadline, then that seat will remain vacant until the time for its regularly scheduled election.

6. Illness or death within the committee member's family constitutes an excusable absence. The reason will be submitted in writing to the other committee members.

E. Officers

1. There shall be three officers with the following titles: Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary.

2. The committee shall elect the officers annually for a term of one year. A committee member must have served at least one year before assuming an office. It is suggested that the Chairman must have served as an officer within her current term before being eligible for Chairman.

3. The outgoing State Women's Leadership Committee Chairman will preside during the election of officers for the State Women's Leadership Committee at the annual Alabama Farmers Federation Meeting. If she is unable to attend, the Vice-Chairman will preside and will be succeeded by the Secretary in the event that both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are not present.

F. Representative on State Board of Directors

The State Chairman shall be nominated for election to the State Board of Directors as a fully endowed member of the board.

COUNTY WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

At the grassroots level, county Farmers Federation women's committees operate for the purpose of implementing Farmers Federation policy. Membership in the local committee is offered to the active Farmers Federation member. Each commodity interest coordinator enlists members in her group from women whose farm income is derived from the commodity.

A. Membership

The county committee shall be composed of the active Farmers Federation women memberships.

B. Officers

There shall be three officers with the following titles: chairman, vice-chairman and secretary-reporter. The county Farmers Federation office secretary may serve as associate secretary.

C. Commodities

The county president appoints a Commodity Interest Group coordinator with board approval for specific commodities. This person becomes the liaison of the county Farmers Federation women's committee to the specific commodity committee and in turn provides the leadership for the county Farmers Federation women's Commodity Interest Group.

D. Executive Committee

The committee's Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers and commodity interest coordinators.

E. Representation on County Board of Directors

The county Farmers Federation women's committee Executive Committee chairman and vice chairman shall be nominated for election to the county board of directors as a fully endowed member of the board, if stated in each county by-laws.

PROCEDURE FOR COUNTY ORGANIZATION

STEP 1 - The county board of directors may authorize the establishment of an active county Farmers Federation Women's Leadership Committee.

STEP 2 - Officers (chairman, vice chairman, secretary) can either be appointed by the county president or elected from a meeting of interested women.

STEP 3 - A meeting of all interested women should be called. The coordinator of the women's activities should be present to explain thoroughly the total women's programs in Alabama. State Leadership Committee women may also be helpful.

STEP 4 - In addition to the three executive officers, women commodity interest coordinators may be appointed to complement county commodity committees.

STEP 5 - The yearly program of work should be formulated from the program of work determined by the State Women's Leadership Committee and from local needs.

STEP 6 - Chairmen should be named for each project.

STEP 7 - Telephone chairmen should be named for each area of the county to form a telephone grid or tree. Names should be assigned to each.

TIPS FOR COUNTY CHAIRMAN

1. Make everyone feel welcome. If yours is a large group, appoint a hostess committee.
2. Don't change regular meeting dates unless absolutely necessary.
3. Have agenda made out before the day of the meeting.
4. Call the meeting to order on time. If a member misses out on something, she won't be late next time.
5. Stand when presiding, except when you grant the floor to another.
6. Maintain order using a gavel if necessary. Keeping this group on the subject is sometimes difficult but essential. Sidetracking may be interesting, but it may defeat the purpose of the meeting.
7. The art of leadership is the art of developing people. To get people to work for you, give them the feeling they are working with you. Delegate responsibilities to other people –don't try to do it all yourself. Whenever you appoint a person or a committee, tell them specifically what you want them to do and when it should be done.
8. Keep your county officers informed on all Farmers Federation information you receive.
9. Involve as many Farmers Federation women as possible in activities.

10. Appoint chairmen and let them coordinate the assigned program or project.

11. When possible, combine your committee's efforts with other organizations in conducting community-wide projects.

12. Keep accurate records of each project and activity; i.e. number involved, types and frequency of activities, letters of commendations, etc.

13. Maintain a complete file of clippings, radio/TV script, fact sheets, photos, etc., for use in reporting.

14. Recognize all people working on a project.

SUGGESTED COUNTY WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Invocation or Devotional**
3. **Roll Call**
4. **Reading of Minutes of Previous Meeting**
5. **Chairman's Remarks**
6. **Subcommittee Reports**
7. **Unfinished Business**
8. **New Business**
9. **Elections or Appointments**
10. **Program (optional)**
11. **Adjournment**
12. **Recreation or Refreshments**

GUIDELINES FOR FARMERS FEDERATION WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE PROGRAM PLANNING

THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

A planning committee should meet to outline a program for the coming year to be discussed by the new Farmers Federation Women' Leadership Committees for any change and acceptance. The County Farmers Federation Board must also approve it.

Materials you will need:

- **This guideline sheet**
- **A copy of county Farmers Federation policies**
- **A copy of last year's program**
- **A list of the Farmers Federation women's committee members for each planning committee member**
- **The chairman's manual**

THE PROGRAM

The program should include: action projects, information and educational activities, which are compatible with Farmers Federation policies.

Every FFWLC meeting should include a program item, which will be of interest to most members.

Every FFWLC member should have at least one specific assignment for the year. The women should be placed on the subcommittee according to their interests. The planning committee should discuss what subcommittee would be needed to be responsible for each activity and each meeting.

So that the women's program can reach maximum effectiveness in helping implement Farmers Federation policy, all program activities should be tailored to local needs and carried out at the county level. The suggest program plan is intended to serve as a guide in assisting times, the selected program should be within the framework of Farmers Federation policy.

Materials from the state Farmers Federation office will be sent at regular intervals and other program information may be obtained upon request.

*****A description on the program plan is found on the pages that follow.**

Alabama Farmers Federation Program for Women

SUGGESTED PROGRAM OF WORK

The following program ideas are for your consideration. They were planned by your State Women's Leadership Committee and approved by the board of directors of the Alabama Farmers Federation.

County Farmers Federation women's leadership committees are urged to establish their goals, set priorities and develop a program adapted to meet their own member's needs. At all times, the selected program should be within the framework of Farmers Federation policy.

Materials from the state Farmers Federation office will be sent at regular intervals and other program information may be obtained upon request.

The four major areas of interest include:

- **Organization**
- **Local Affairs**
- **Legislation and Political Education**
- **Agricultural Marketing and Consumer Service**

ORGANIZATION

Women play a significant and important role in building an effective Farmers Federation. Participation of women in the total program adds great strength to the organization, county and state.

GOALS

Increase the number of women participating in Farmers Federation activities as well as serving in leadership capacities within the county Farmers Federation while enriching their knowledge of each other, the Farmers Federation and agriculture.

ACTIVITIES

- Have a planning meeting for setting goals and determining activities.
- Participate in workshops, seminars, conferences and regional meetings.
- Provide input to State Women's Leadership Committee on program and project ideas.
- Have a county fair booth to stimulate interest in Farmers Federation.
- Encourage selection of women on county, state committees and boards.
- Work closely with other groups such as 4-H, FFA, FCCLA and adult civic groups.
- Encourage participation by women in county Farmers Federation policy development meetings.
- Involve more women through the use of programs and project committees.
- Report back to county committee or board of directors at least one thing learned while attending each of the state activities.
- Have a planned program, which provides educational opportunities at every women's leadership committee meeting.
- Have regular monthly or bimonthly committee meetings.
- Have county awards program to recognize achievement by county women in county and state projects.

LOCAL AFFAIRS

GOALS:

To surface and solve problems when they exist in the community through the involvement of members. Such a program provides a means for increasing the influence and prestige of farmers and farm wives as well as county Farmers Federations.

ACTIVITIES:

- Sponsor self-protection program.
- Sponsor program on cancer provided by the American Cancer Society.
- Sponsor drug and alcohol abuse programs for all grade levels.
- Observe National Farm Safety Week through the presentation of farm safety program. (Local EMT's may be used)
- Work for new medical personnel.
- Sponsor CPR or first aid programs for local memberships.
- Work with local agencies to help the elderly, poor, blind, handicapped and those needing assistance.
- Encourage young people to become involved in working with the elderly for the mutual benefit of both. (example – "Adopt –A-Grandparent" or Senior program)
- Support measures to conserve energy.
- Have someone specifically assigned to monitor anything happening in the county that could adversely affect rural life.
- Sponsor an adult driver's education program.
- Sponsor or assist with a county clean-up project.
- Help implement or improve Ag in the Classroom in county schools.
- Participate in projects with The Ronald McDonald Houses.

LEGISLATION AND POLITICAL EDUCATION

GOALS:

Gain a good, responsive government through participation in the political process of selecting and electing candidates who believe in the basic Farmers Federation policy. Give support individually to Farmers Federation policy in the state legislation and in Congress.

ACTIVITIES

- Become acquainted with your state representative and state senator and key committee members.
- Sponsor a county legislative workshop.
- Write letters to the editor and new articles presenting the policies of Farmers Federation and its membership.
- Encourage voter registration of Farmers Federation members.
- Assist with and serve on policy action committees.
- Organize a county telephone contact system.
- Contact and support state and national legislators on key legislative issues.
- Write letters and make personal contact with state and national legislators.
- Present program to high school classes on farm issues.
- At all elections encourage voter participation.
- Watch for and report voter fraud.
- Visit Alabama legislature while it is in session.

HOW TO WRITE YOUR LEGISLATORS

Letter to Legislator should:

- Be individual letters, not form letters, perhaps hand written. Use your own stationery.
- Be sincere and to the point. Show your name and address.
- Give one or two reasons for your request.
- Be courteous. Don't scold or threaten when making request. Identify legislation by number or bill. (ex. House bill 11 or Senate bill 68)

- Write to your own legislators. It benefits little to write legislators from other districts unless you have tip-off information that could start an investigation or similar action.
- Know what you are talking about.
- Be timed properly. Not over one or two letters on same bill. Same person should not write too often.
- Express appreciation for good job well done and identify reference so that he knows that you know it was a favorable vote, a good speech, or effective committee activity.
- Remember that legislators are human beings who want to be liked and appreciated as human beings, not for what they can do for you.

SAMPLE LETTER TO YOUR LEGISLATORS

Honorable John B. Doe
United States Senate
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Doe:

I urge you to (oppose/support) legislation on Senate Bill #, currently before the senate. My first reason is _____, second _____, third _____.

Sincerely yours,

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING AND CONSUMER SERVICING

GOALS:

To promote better farm/consumer relations and improve the image of the American farmer by making the general public aware of the problems and complexities of modern agriculture.

ACTIVITIES:

- Organize and participate in a speaker's system/bureau.
- Conduct a commodity promotion during the year by using newspapers, radio, TV, posters, grocery store displays, handouts, etc. (May want to have a monthly commodity promotion)
- Compile list of clubs, organizations, etc., in community who could be approached about using an Ag presentation (power point/video) as one of their programs.
- Participate in Alabama Farmers Federation Heritage Cooking Contest.
- Conduct county cotton sewing contests.
- Assist in commodity education information. (especially emphasize main commodity in area)
- Cooperate in Farm-City week.
- Provide petting zoo of farm animals for school children.
- Show video, you tube, power point presentations at schools, clubs, etc.
- Provide a farm, tour, exhibit, or presentation for school children.
- Provide consumer program on agricultural imports vs. exports.
- Provide nutrition program for children or adults.
- Sponsor marketing seminar on county basis.
- Have a project to promote the understanding of agriculture on Ag Day. (Usually in Spring of each Year)
- Become involved in and promote "Ag in the Classroom" and Ag Literacy.