

**The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
in the Alabama Black Belt**

A Report of the
Alabama State Advisory Committee
to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights
April 1968

THE AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE

IN THE ALABAMA BLACK BELT

A report of an open meeting

by the Alabama State Advisory Committee

to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights

April 1968

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PREFACE

The United States Commission on Civil Rights

The United States Commission on Civil Rights is an independent agency of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957. By the terms of that Act, as amended by the Civil Rights Acts of 1960 and 1964, the Commission is charged with the following duties: investigation of individual discriminatory denials of the right to vote; study of legal developments with respect to denials of the equal protection of the law; maintenance of a national clearinghouse for information respecting denials of the equal protection of the law; and investigation of patterns or practices of fraud or discrimination in the conduct of Federal elections. The Commission also is required to submit reports to the President and the Congress at such times as the Commission, the Congress, or the President shall deem desirable.

The State Advisory Committees

An Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights has been established in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia pursuant to section 105 (c) of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 as amended. The Committees are made up of knowledgeable persons who serve without compensation. Their functions under their mandate from the Commission are to: advise the Commission of all relevant information concerning their respective States on matters within the jurisdiction of the Commission; advise the Commission upon matters of mutual concern in the preparation of reports of the Commission to the President and Congress; receive reports, suggestions, and recommendations from individuals, public and private organizations, and public officials upon matters pertinent to inquiries conducted by the State Committee; initiate and forward advice and recommendations to the Commission upon matters which the State Committee has studied; assist the Commission in matters in which the Commission shall request the assistance of the State Committee; and attend, as observers, any public hearing or conference which the Commission may hold within the State.

This report was submitted to the United States Commission on Civil Rights by the Alabama State Advisory Committee. The conclusions and recommendations are based upon the Advisory Committee's evaluation of information received at its open meeting held in Selma on May 26-27, 1967. This report has been received by the Commission and will be considered by it in making its reports and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

INTRODUCTION

On May 26-27, 1967 the Alabama State Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights held an open meeting in Selma to consider the operation of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in six Black Belt counties: Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Sumter, and Wilcox. Federal, State, and county ASCS officials, local residents, farmers, and civil rights workers were heard.

The meeting was in response to allegations that there was racial discrimination in ASCS elections, and the Service's employment practices and that the agency's programs had failed to involve poor Negroes. These allegations coincided with the conclusion of the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights 1965 Report, Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs, that:

The most serious problems of equal protection of the laws in the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service programs are the exclusion of Negroes from the decision-making of State and county committees and from employment in county offices.

The Alabama State Advisory Committee undertook this study because ASCS programs, in addition to being decisive factors in the livelihoods of farm operators and the communities in which they live, are crucial to the economy of the entire Nation.

In order to determine whether the situation described in the Commission's 1965 Report has remained unchanged in the Alabama Black Belt, individuals with first-hand knowledge of the programs--officials, farmers, and persons who have been working

with the farmers--were invited to meet with the Committee. In addition, an analysis of the operation of ASCS in 26 Alabama counties was prepared by the staff of the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights. The 26 counties were selected because Negroes constituted 20 percent or more of the farm operators in 1964. In 12 of these counties, Negroes constituted more than 50 percent of the farm operators.

This report explains the operation of the ASCS, and summarizes information collected at the meeting. The Advisory Committee's conclusions and recommendations are based on information presented at the meeting and staff research.

The Alabama State Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights hopes that this report will stimulate appropriate action by the U. S. Department of Agriculture to correct whatever violations of Federal policy that exist.

THE AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) was organized in June 1961 as the successor to agencies first established by the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 to administer programs of agricultural conservation, crop acreage allotments, and commodity price supports. The basic purpose of such programs is to control surplus production and stabilize the income of farmers engaged in growing the allotted crops.

The ASCS is headed by an administrator in Washington, D. C. with six area directors, 50 State offices, and 3,061 county offices. There are 67 county offices in Alabama.

ASCS is responsible for the administration of the following programs:

Agricultural Conservation

Farmers and landowners who participate in the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) receive assistance averaging about one-half the cost of carrying out soil and water conservation practices. This includes such operations as grass and tree planting and erosion control. Approximately \$225 million is spent on this program annually in the United States.

Crop Acreage Allotments

Acreage allotments and diversions of land use are methods of controlling the production of such basic commodities as cotton, rice, peanuts, tobacco, wheat, and

rice. More than three million farm acreage allotments are determined each year. National acreage allotments are divided among farms on the basis of past history of production of the crop within each State. For cotton, State allotments are apportioned among counties and the county allotment is then apportioned among farms. Commodity diversion payments are made to producers of feed grains, cotton, and winter wheat who agree to reduce their acreage planted in these crops. In fiscal year 1965, such payments amounted to \$947 million in the United States.

Other production adjustment programs include the Cropland Adjustment Program, which seeks to encourage farmers to shift their croplands planted in surplus crops to long-range conservation, recreational, or open-space use, and the Conservation Reserve Program, or Soil Bank, under which producers agree to keep cropland out of production on a long-term basis. Although this program was closed in 1960, rental payments are still being made on acreage covered prior to 1960.

Price Support

To insure stable market prices and to provide protection for farm income, the ASCS supports commodity price levels by loans to farmers, direct purchases of their crops, and price support payments on certain commodities. The dollar value of price support extended on 1964 crops was \$3.1 billion.

HOW ASCS FUNCTIONS

The Southeast Area office has supervisory authority for all ASCS activities in eight Southeastern states, including Alabama. Although the State and county ASCS offices

carry out the program in the field, the area office is responsible for implementing non-discrimination regulations in ASCS employment programs and administration. The area director and his staff exercise this responsibility through instructions to subordinate offices and through review and correction of justified complaints.

EMPLOYMENT

State and county ASCS employees are paid wholly from Federal funds, though only the State employees are under the U. S. Civil Service System. However, they are all subject to the nondiscrimination requirements of the Federal Government and the Department of Agriculture.

Following passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the ASCS administrator sent a letter to the Chairmen of State ASCS Committees on March 22, 1965 in which he announced the following policy:

Provide equal employment opportunities in the State and county offices during this and succeeding years. Full consideration will be given to the previous imbalance of employment which has prevailed. In each State, the goal will be to achieve a minority group employment percentage equal to the percentage of nonwhite farmers in the State.

This policy however was suspended in November 1966 because it was determined that it conflicted with Civil Service merit nonquota regulations. The policy was modified to provide that, without any formula, ASCS "continue to make available enlarged employment opportunities for disadvantaged people and people who are members of minority races."

Several participants in the open meeting reported that despite official pronouncements, employment discrimination is still widespread in Alabama ASCS offices.

Robert Valder, Associate Director of the Alabama Council on Human Relations, said that, "The ASCS State office has about 43 employees. Two of them are Negroes. One is a female clerk-typist and one is a male clerical worker."

The Committee was told also that as of December 31, 1966, there were no Negroes among the 25 professional employees in the State ASCS office.

When Jack Bridges, Alabama State ASCS Committee Chairman, was asked why none of the 25 professionals was Negro, he replied: "We have two or three Negroes in the State office." When it was pointed out that the Negroes were clerical and not professional employees, Mr. Bridges replied: "Well, we have what is called a program specialist. I don't think that we could find anyone who was qualified with the proper training. I do not say that there were none with the proper training, but there was none available at that time."

In the 26 counties studied, only seven of the 130 regular county office employees and none of the 22 regular field employees were Negroes as of December 31, 1967. In 1966 there were six Negro employees among the 127 regular office personnel in the county ASCS offices and none prior to 1965.

Though six county office managers were invited to meet with the Advisory Committee, none appeared on the first day of the meeting. Because of the efforts of the ASCS Southeast area officials, two office managers and two compliance supervisors appeared the following day.

Explaining why no Negroes were employed in the Sumter County ASCS office, Woodson Ennis, the office manager, claimed that there had been virtually no turn-over in his staff. He said: "...of the clerks that are in my office, they...have a period of service for over 100 years, collectively. Well, we have had no vacancy for a full time employee."*

Jack Strother, Wilcox County ASCS office manager, stated that his office has two field reporters who "have been doing that for over 15 years," but no new reporters have been hired in 1967. In 1966, "we had three reporters in the field...which were non-white," Mr. Strother said.

Gains in seasonal and part time employment for Negroes have been made, but little progress has been registered in permanent employment opportunities.

In Dallas County where three of every four farm operators are Negro, there are no Negro permanent employees in the ASCS office. Milton Morrow, compliance supervisor, said that though the office employed no Negroes at the time of the open meeting, "We had three last year and six the year before." They were employed temporarily as field men to measure land.

Mr. Morrow said that persons hired as field men, "...have to be a high school graduate and know how to figure ground measurements...There is no test." The six Negroes who worked in this capacity in 1965 were school teachers, said Mr. Morrow.

*A Negro has been hired as a staff member of the Sumter County ASCS office since the Advisory Committee meeting.

Another compliance supervisor, E. B. Davis, employed by the Wilcox County ASCS office since 1934, was reluctant to meet with the Committee or answer any questions. When asked if a Negro could do the work he performs, Mr. Davis replied: "He could, but he wouldn't have the experience as I have." He then added, "I have had colored...compliance boys work under me and I had one that was just as good as any white that I have ever had...He checked land good. He didn't smoke and he didn't drink."

Negro farmers and civil rights workers charged that white landowners help perpetuate the system which excludes Negroes from employment in the ASCS offices. Shirley Mesher, a civil rights worker in Dallas County, accused ASCS officials of being more attentive to the interests of the white landowners than to the needs of Negro farmers. Because of their identification with the white community, ASCS officials help maintain the traditional patterns of racial segregation in the areas in which they work, Miss Mesher charged.

John Vance, ASCS Southeast Area Director, however claimed that the agency was making progress in the employment of Negroes. Explaining why there are no Negro county office managers, Mr. Vance said, "The county committee...is elected by the farmers...and is entitled to appoint the county office manager."

Equal employment opportunity is given time and attention comparable to that given any other phase of ASCS responsibility, Mr. Vance stated. Regarding complaints, Mr. Vance said, "To the best of my knowledge every instance where there has been an allegation of discrimination in the field of employment, we have religiously referred

those complaints to the official investigative agency of the department, which is our Inspector General, and those complaints have been thoroughly investigated by experienced and trained agents, some of whom have included people from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In every instance where a violation has been proven, to my knowledge, action has been taken."

A member of the Advisory Committee asked how could complainants expect justice when they are required to file their complaints with the county committee--the group they are complaining about.

Mr. Vance replied that the procedure provides that the first appeal be made to the county committee and that its ruling can be appealed to the State committee and finally to Washington.

Victor B. Phillips, Assistant to the Administrator of ASCS, said that "a notice of equal opportunity is posted in all county offices." Regarding employment, the notice states:

Every person has a right to equal employment opportunities in the ASCS. ASCS and USDA acknowledge and will protect this right. No person or employee or applicants will be discriminated against because of race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.

STATE ASCS COMMITTEES

The farmer committee system is the most important element in the administration of the ASCS programs at the local level. Committees are responsible for the key decisions regarding crop allotment, price support, and conservation--programs directly affecting the farmer.

The five-member State committee, the policy-making group in each State, is appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture for one-year terms to supervise the work of the county committees. Members are appointed to give representation to the major types of farming and geographical areas of the State. To be eligible for appointment, a person must be actively engaged in farming and must be interested in and sympathetic toward the ASCS programs.

Prior to 1965, no Negro had ever been appointed to a State committee in the South. In 1965 Negroes were appointed to State committees in Arkansas, Maryland, and Mississippi, and in 1967, to State committees in Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. The Negro member of the Alabama State committee appointed in 1967 is part owner of a 260 acre farm. The four white members own farms ranging in size from 320 to 6,218 acres.

Mr. Bridges said the Negro member of the Alabama State ASCS committee was appointed in 1967 following a policy enunciated by the ASCS Administrator that there should be a Negro State committeeman where there are 10 percent or more Negro farmers. The Negro appointee filled the first available vacancy on the committee, he said. Mr. Bridges said officials at Tuskegee Institute and other responsible Negro leaders were consulted about the appointment.

According to Mr. Valder, the usual procedure is to have new State committee members recommended by the State director, the State committee, and the State congressional delegation. The committee's first Negro member however apparently was

appointed without the knowledge of these individuals. The State director told Mr. Valder that he did not know anything about the appointment until he read the newspaper announcement.

On March 22, 1965, the Administrator of ASCS established a policy affecting 11 Southern States which required that:

"...an advisory committee of capable Negroes (be established) to assist the ASCS State committee in assuring:

- (a) equal employment opportunities at both State and county levels,
- (b) equal opportunity to participate in ASCS programs, (and)
- (c) full participation in community and county committee elections, both as voters and candidates."

These separate, all-Negro bodies were to be comprised of Negro educators, businessmen, ministers, and farmers. Only one of the four Negro members of the State Advisory Committee in Alabama is a farmer.

The Alabama State Advisory Committee to the Commission was told by civil rights workers that the all-Negro State ASCS Advisory Committee is ineffectual and does not afford Negro farmers a meaningful degree of control over decisions affecting their livelihood. Neither does it provide equality of participation in the federally assisted farm programs. However, if it is viewed as a temporary effort to provide Negroes a voice in ASCS programs, it can be tolerated, the civil rights representatives asserted. Mr. Valder however contended that the committee had no authority and suggested that it be abolished.

Mr. Vance explained that the Advisory Committee met occasionally with the State Committee and advised it on equal opportunity matters. Mr. Bridges defended the Advisory Committee as being "...a fine group of gentlemen..."

COUNTY AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

Each county is divided into communities. Farm operators in each community elect a community committee comprised of three regular and two alternate committeemen. The regular members convene with those from other communities in the county to elect a county committee of three regular and two alternate members. County committees are the primary point of control in local ASCS programs. They are responsible for setting the policy and goals of the county program, implementing it, supervising committee elections, hiring the county office manager, and fixing the rates of pay for office personnel.

Although the main function of the community committees is to inform farmers of the purpose and provisions of ASCS programs, most Negro farmers complained that they have not been informed by the committees about the programs.

In concept, the committee system is intended to function as an institution of grass roots democracy and as an instrument of efficient administration of government agriculture policy. It has been criticized as being deficient on both accounts. As Morton Grodzins, a member of an independent study committee that reviewed the system in 1962, reported:

The very fact of intimate acquaintanceship with and participation in the local community may lead not to even handed justice but to subservience to the powerful and neglect of the weak. (It is worth noting that in all the county committees of the South there has never been, as far as I can discover, a single Negro member.) Justice, in other words, may be hindered by intimacy and fostered by aloofness. This is especially so in a rural community where powerful people have a great opportunity to punish their local opponents with a wide range of economic, social, and political weapons.

Until 1964, Negroes had not, with rare exceptions, participated in ASCS committee elections in the South. After the 1966 elections, none of 4,146 regular county committeemen in any county in the South was a Negro. In fact, of 2,764 alternate county committeemen in the South, only two, both in Georgia, were Negroes. Of 27,198 regular community committeemen only 113 were Negro, and of 18,132 alternate community committeemen, only 430 were Negroes. Alternate committeemen are nonvoting members. There are 58 counties in the South where Negro farmers constitute the majority and approximately 320 where they constitute at least 20 percent of the farm operators.

For the six counties considered at the open meeting, 11 of the 104 regular community committeemen and 12 of the 76 alternate community committeemen were Negroes, although 63 to 74 percent of the farm operators in these counties were Negro.

According to the Sumter County ASCS office manager there were so few Negro committeemen because "colored people...prefer that the white men carry on their business activities."

The March 1965 ASCS policy stipulated that county committees were to place Negroes on the ballot for community committee elections in proportion to the number of Negro farmers in the county. In Greene County, 163 Negroes were nominated in eight communities for 40 positions. In Lowndes County, 135 Negroes were nominated in six communities for 30 positions.

Several Negro farmers charged that county committees deliberately nominated a large number of Negroes for election to the community committees in order to dilute the Negro vote thus assuring white control. To prevent such abuses in the 1966 elections, ASCS revised its nominating procedures to require that community committee nominations be limited to not less than six nor more than ten persons, exclusive of petitions, and that the slate contain Negro nominees in the same proportion as they are to the farm population of the community.

In 1966, as a result of the revised nominating procedure, 290 Negroes were nominated by the committees in the six Black Belt counties, whereas in 1965, 601 Negroes were nominated by the committees.

Although Negro voting participation in committee elections is increasing, it is still proportionately less than that of whites. In some cases there have been declines in the number of Negro eligible voters.

Three of every four farm operators in Greene County are Negro according to the 1964 Census of Agriculture. In 1965, Negro eligible voters outnumbered whites, 1,305 (70 percent) to 560, with majorities in seven of Greene county's eight communities. There were 184 Negroes listed as candidates. Although whites voted a remarkable

92.5 percent of their eligibles, Negro votes still outnumbered whites 561 to 518. Twenty-four white and no Negro candidates were elected as regular committeemen. Only one of the 16 alternate committeemen elected was Negro.

In 1966 the number of Negroes eligible to vote dropped to 1,204 and the number of whites increased to 573, although Negroes continued in the majority in seven of the eight communities and accounted for 67.8 percent of all eligible voters. Again a remarkable percentage of white eligibles voted--90.6 percent--while the Negro vote dropped to only 40.3 percent of eligibles. As a result, more whites than Negroes voted--519 to 485. Eighty-nine Negroes were candidates for election, of whom 66 were nominated by the committees. One Negro was elected as a regular committeeman and another as an alternate committeeman. Both successful candidates were among the 23 Negroes who had been nominated by petition. The Negro elected as a regular committeeman lived in a community where Negroes outnumber white eligibles 308 to 82.

Negro voting in 1966 decreased in five of the seven communities in Greene County. Amazing differences in Negro and white participation occurred in the same communities. In one community (Eutaw and Springfield) 151 (93.3 percent) of 163 eligible whites voted but only 56 (28 percent) of 200 eligible Negroes voted. In another community (Union), 55 (96.6 percent) of 58 eligible whites voted but only 14 (20.5 percent) of 73 eligible Negroes voted.

Several persons told the Committee that Negro farmers, eligible to vote in the elections, are reluctant to do so for fear of economic reprisal. White landowners and farm operators are determined to maintain control. Where Negroes are in the majority, said Rev. Percy McShan of Greene County, the white man is trying to force him out.

Rev. Thomas Earl Gillmore, also of Greene County, reiterated Rev. McShan's charge, claiming that Negro farmers are being evicted because they are attempting to exercise their rights to participate in ASCS elections. He estimated that 70 families in Greene County were evicted between May 1966 and May 1967. In one case 13 families were evicted from one farm and 19 from another, he said. "A man had lived on a white man's place for 37 years, and his eviction notice was a matter of 'you be out tomorrow,'" said Rev. Gillmore.

Asked where they go when evicted, Rev. Gillmore answered: "They go to Detroit, Chicago, New York, Birmingham, the next county."

Rev. McShan told the Committee that he spent a great deal of time explaining election procedures and getting people to vote. He said that he did not know of any meetings that ASCS had called. "The only thing that they have done is to send out a letter from the office."

Mrs. Lillian S. McGill of Lowndes County told the Alabama State Advisory Committee that although ASCS elections began in 1933, Negroes had only recently realized their significance. In the past, she said, Negroes voted for the five or six white candidates listed on the ballots because they were told to vote "...in order to keep cotton in the State of Alabama so that they may be able to get the amount of acreage that they needed." According to Mrs. McGill, Negroes knew nothing about the ASCS elections or the ASCS programs until about 1965.

"In 1965 the Lowndes County Christian Movement was initiated and the Negroes began to take interest in finding out that the ASCS elections was one of the greatest

organizations in the county and that it had full control over the price support and eligibility along with the amount of income that the farmers had," Mrs. McGill said. "That was when the average Negro income was less than \$500 savings a year after a starving family had worked themselves to death. At this particular time we decided that that year, 1965, that we would do something about trying to get Negroes on the ballot."

It was through the efforts of the civil rights organizations that Negro farmers met and became informed about the ASCS elections and programs, Mrs. McGill said. The Negroes were unsuccessful however in winning election to community committees.

Mrs. McGill charged that the ASCS county committee nominated 75 Negroes in a successful effort to split the Negro vote. She also charged that "many Negroes voted for whites because the landlords took up the ballots and they voted the way they wanted them to vote." If Negro tenants refused to cooperate, the landlords reduced their farm acreage, raised their rents or evicted them from the farm, she pointed out.

Negro farmers from each of the six counties gave examples of irregularities connected with ASCS voting and election procedures.

- One farmer alleged that where there were two or more Negro farmers in one house they received only one ballot, but frequently the wives and children of white farmers received ballots.

- A Negro farmer elected as an alternate to a community committee claimed that he never was notified of or invited to committee meetings. Another alternate said that he was told his job would be to inform people about ASCS programs, but he was never given any information to transmit.

- Several tenant farmers claimed their landlords asked them for their ASCS ballot or told them how to vote. When they refused to comply, they were evicted. Other Negro farmers said they were evicted for encouraging people to vote or for being active in civil rights.

- A Dallas County tenant farmer said that the ASCS office manager prevented Negro watchers from observing the 1966 election ballots being counted.

- A Greene County farmer alleged that the local nominating committee "loaded" the ballots with "Uncle Toms" and only five white names, so that the Negro vote would be split and the whites would win.

- A Negro who filed a petition as a candidate for committeeman said that his petition was disqualified because it was alleged that the farmers who signed it did not live in the community. According to the candidate, his signers were community residents but some of them farmed in another community. Of the 11 farmers who signed the petition, six were disqualified. He needed six signers.

- When a civil rights group attempted to obtain the list of eligible voters in Dallas County, it was told the list would cost \$285.

- A general complaint made by many Negro farmers and civil rights workers was that no meaningful effort is being made by ASCS to inform Negroes about the elections; Negroes are intimidated; and the ballots are tampered with.

Donald Jelinek, an attorney working with Negro farmers, stated that the Department of Agriculture "finally discovered the Negro in 1964," when ASCS election procedures made provision for Negro representation on community and county

committees. But Negro farmers and civil rights workers were intimidated, arrested, and shot at, said Jelinek.

By 1965, Negroes planned to participate actively in the elections, but new techniques were found to block them, he continued. Scores of Negro names were added to the ballot; farmers were evicted; ballots were destroyed.

Observing that the Department of Agriculture every year reacts to the evasions of the previous year "and every year the South is one step ahead...", Mr. Jelinek suggested the following changes to correct the abuses in the ASCS election procedure:

- A permanent election date.
- Regular quarterly visits by county committees to Negro areas to inform farmers of election procedures.
- A clearly written notice of elections containing the name of the district, a list of eligible farmers and a blank nominating petition should be mailed to each farmer.
- Eligibility should be limited to farmers working the land.
- A 30-day period should elapse between the notice and the election.
- Nominations should be made by the farmers rather than the county committees.
- Lists of nominees, including the signers of their petitions should be published.
- Individuals filing defective petitions should be given five days to correct the defect.
- Photographs as well as names of candidates should appear on the ballots.

- Ballots should be mailed to a post office box and remain there until counted.
- Ballots should be counted in a room large enough to accommodate observers.

In a prepared statement to the Committee, Mr. Vance outlined the following steps taken by ASCS to prevent discrimination in the 1967 elections:

- All elections to be held during the third week of September.
- A secret mail ballot.
- Notice of elections, petition, and boundaries were to be mailed to eligible voters 35 days prior to election as well as public notice.
- A list of all known eligible voters by community was to be available for inspection in the county office 45 days before election.
- In communities with 10 percent or more eligible minority group voters the county committee must place a minority group member on the ballot unless nominated by the community committee or by petition.
- Uniform ballot format to be used throughout the country.
- At least 10 days before return, ballot and instructions were to be mailed to each known eligible voter of record.
- Certification on ballot return envelope had been clarified.
- The location for counting ballots must not be segregated and should be large enough to accommodate all authorized persons.
- Any bona fide candidate or his designee, if requested, was to be allowed to observe the counting of the ballots.
- ASCS was to make special efforts to encourage all, especially minority group farmers, to participate more fully in the committee elections.

Victor B. Phillips, Assistant to the ASCS Administrator, also expressed the hope that the new policy would increase the effectiveness of the minority group vote. It was pointed out that in 1964 there were no Negro community committeemen in Alabama. In 1965, 11 Negroes were elected regular community committeemen and in 1966, 23 Negro community committeemen were elected.

The 1967 figures reveal that despite the new policy, only 22 Negroes were elected regular community committeemen in Alabama.

A letter appealing the results of the 1967 Macon County community committee elections was filed with the county, State, and Federal ASCS. (See Appendix 8). The appeal alleged that ballots mailed to Negroes were returned undelivered to the Macon County ASCS office and no effort was made to locate the voters. The appeal also alleged that the ballots of Negroes with improperly spelled or illegible signatures were disqualified. It was further alleged that white voters were solicited by the county office but Negro voters were not, and the white vote was solidified by nominating the minimum number of white candidates while the Negro vote was diluted by the nomination of an excessive number of Negroes in addition to those nominated by petition.

Mr. Phillips was asked if intimidation prevents Negroes from participating in ASCS elections. He admitted that there have been such allegations but "investigation reports do not substantiate this." He added that the reason mail ballots were substituted for polling places was to minimize intimidation.

Asked what action ASCS would take if a landlord marked a tenant's ballot, Mr. Phillips pointed out that the voter must certify that he has marked the ballot himself and misrepresentation is punishable by a \$10,000 fine and possible imprisonment.

UNEQUAL BENEFITS

The Committee was told by both farmers and civil rights workers that if Negro farmers are uninformed about the election process, they know less about the ASCS programs. This critical lack of knowledge of ASCS procedures and benefits result in part from the absence of Negroes on committees and in professional positions in the ASCS structure, they pointed out. It was alleged that committeemen do not provide program information as they are required to do.

Miss Mesher, for example, told the Advisory Committee:

Information...has not really been given at all. It is sort of coerced out of the officials. If you don't know the right questions to ask, you don't get the information you need. . . There is no display of literature in the ASCS office. . . Even if you can get the information about cotton allotments, and the upland cotton program and about the feed grain program, they are almost impossible to interpret. . . Most of the hand-books are solely for internal purposes, and written for people who have extensive knowledge about the programs.

She added that the farmer who becomes knowledgeable of the things that are available to him and begins to demand them may lose not only his benefits but his farm as well.

Mr. Phillips stated that while efforts to disseminate information are constantly being increased, funds for program administration have been cut. Nevertheless, ASCS insists that public meetings be held to inform farmers of program benefits and that the meetings be publicized through letters, posters, and notices to community

and farm organizations. The ASCS office manager in Wilcox County asserted that the programs are publicized through the county paper and that information meetings are frequently held.

Despite the conflicting allegations, it was clear that Negro farmers feel that they are benefitting very little from ASCS programs. Among the charges heard at the open meeting were:

- Negro farmers are assigned consistently less acreage allotments than whites. Negroes are allotted from one half to three fourths of the acreage they can care for while whites get more acreage than they can handle. Often they release it back to the county committees which redistribute it to persons who have applied for additional acreage.
- Negro farmers are frequently requested to plow under their crops because of incorrect measurement. One participant asserted that ASCS agents "would come out and tell you that you had too much cotton and would have to plow it up and...often on the side that had the best yield."
- County committees estimate higher projected yields for white operators, despite previous production records.
- Negro farmers share unequally in the benefits of the Agricultural Conservation Program because they are not familiar with it, nor would they have the 20 percent of the cost of the improvement which is required as advance payment.
- Negro farmers are unfamiliar with the Cropland Adjustment Program which would permit the conversion of land to nonagricultural use.

- Negro tenants generally assign their allotment checks to their landlords who advance fertilizer and seed but they are not told the amount owed or the amount of the check. Tenants were evicted for refusing to sign over their allotment checks to the landlords.
- Tenants are frequently forced to gin their cotton with or through the landlord and the cotton may be sold without the tenant's knowledge.
- ASCS office personnel do not treat Negroes with respect or address them with courtesy titles.
- Tenants are forced to sign agreements which waive their rights to their personal property and their crop.
- There are no Negroes in the feed grain program although they all grow corn. For example, it was alleged that on one plantation the only persons enrolled in the Feed Grain Program were the owner and three white tenants.
- The ASCS programs as they now exist benefit the large farm operators to the detriment of the tenant farmers. Far from protecting the Negro farmer, ASCS works with landlords to deprive tenants of their rights. ASCS does not consult tenants about cotton allotment and price support decisions.
- There is only one Negro member of the Review Committee to which a farmer may appeal a decision he considers unfair. Although each county office manager must inform the complainant of his right to file an appeal, this is seldom done. The appeals system, as currently devised, is relatively useless to the small farmer. Most Negro farmers believe that when they file complaints of discrimination,

the investigative findings are watered down and local officials are protected in their actions or inaction.

ASCS officials insisted that there is no discrimination in ASCS benefits and that Negroes are treated equally.

Mr. Davis said that he had carried ASCS literature to Negro churches and that he had approved loans to Negroes for ponds and wells under the ACP program in Wilcox County. Mr. Ennis said that he encouraged Negroes and whites to participate in every ASCS program in Sumter County. Mr. Vance explained that the ASCS mails information on ASCS programs to farmers, develops informational brochures and holds educational meetings. Furthermore the Southeastern office had instructed county and State ASCS committees to review participation in the Cotton Diversion and Feed Grain Programs on every farm where there was a tenant or sharecropper to determine whether landlord relationships were proper. He asserted that the Cropland Adjustment, Cotton Diversion, and Feed Grain Program requirement that tenants not be displaced in anticipation of participating in such programs were rigidly enforced by his office and that program payments were denied anyone violating it. He also reported that the ASCS Southeast office conducts an annual survey of participation in the major farm programs by minority group members to determine if any group is denied program benefits.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information presented at the two-day open meeting as well as the data obtained before and after the meeting, the Alabama State Advisory Committee concludes:

Employment

1. In the 26 counties studied, there are very few Negroes employed in either a clerical or professional capacity in State and county ASCS offices in Alabama despite the efforts of the ASCS Administrator and the Southeast Area Director. In 1967, there were only seven Negroes among 137 regular county office employees. Negroes were not employed as regular field employees, and accounted for only 10 of 98 limited*field employees. The Advisory Committee believes that if the U. S. Department of Agriculture enforced its equal employment opportunity policy, many more Negroes would be employed and Negro farmers would share more equally in the benefits of the ASCS programs.
2. Most of the Negro employees appear to have temporary jobs. If the number of temporary employees is reduced there will be a consequent reduction in the number of Negro employees.

*"Limited" means other than regular or permanent employees. They may be part-time, seasonal, or more than 90 days, but less than one year.

State ASCS Committees

3. The interests of Negro farmers are not adequately represented by the State Committee, and its staff appeared to be unresponsive to the needs of the Negro and the poor farmer. The 1967 appointment of a Negro State committeeman is a commendable although belated first step.
4. Despite a structure which appears to be both logical and efficient, directives from the ASCS Administrator to the chairmen of State ASCS Committees are ignored, and are not communicated to or carried out by county offices.
5. The all-Negro State Advisory Committee has no power or influence in ASCS programs in Alabama. Although the Advisory Committee meets occasionally with the State committee, it is unlikely that its members have adequate knowledge about the various ASCS programs to be able to do anything to remedy the denials experienced by Negro farmers.

County and Community Committees

6. The county committees which administer the ASCS programs on the local level have tremendous impact on the lives of the farmers in the counties. They are dominated by the white farmers who, through their control of the committees, control the appointment of the county office managers.

7. The fact that only two of the six county office managers invited to attend (and directed to do so by the ASCS Administrator) appeared at the Alabama State Advisory Committee's open meeting, is indicative of the lack of control by Washington over the county officials. They appear to be loyal to the county committee, controlled by whites.
8. The county committeemen are able to perpetuate their control of the committees through control of nominations, and the machinery to inform voters of the election procedures. No Negro has ever been elected to a county committee, although they represent a majority of farm operators in 12 Alabama counties.
9. The community committees perform no function other than nominating county committees. They are ostensibly supposed to inform farmers about ASCS programs but they fail to do so.
10. Negroes are significantly under-represented on the community committees. In 1966, only 23 of 590 regular committeemen were Negro in the 26 selected counties.
11. Civil rights and Negro organizations are to be credited for the election of the Negro committeemen. ASCS procedures and supervision had little to do with Negro election successes.
12. Negroes nominated by petition are more likely to be elected than those nominated by the committees. Negro farmers expressed the belief that committee-nominated Negroes would be subservient to white landowners.

13. There have been several cases of voting irregularities, as well as intimidation of Negro tenant farmers who actively participated in the election process.

Unequal Benefits

14. There has been a failure by ASCS to communicate information about its programs to Negro farmers who could benefit most from them and as a result many programs designed to improve their operations go unused. Materials explaining programs are not made available and, if obtained, are difficult to understand.
15. ASCS State and county staff appear to have vested interests in the system which excludes Negroes from sharing equally in ASCS program benefits. They were accused of not sharing information with Negro farmers and not treating them with respect.
16. The ASCS programs offer no protection to tenant farmers who have been evicted from the land for not assigning their ASCS checks to their landlords.
17. The ASCS programs appear to benefit the large white farm operators while the small Negro and white farmers are being forced off the land.
18. Greater equality would be achieved if ASCS enforced its nondiscrimination requirements. Little control or supervision appears to be exerted by Washington. Criteria for compliance has not been established.

Summary Conclusion

19. In the introduction to this report it was noted that the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights in its 1965 Report on Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs concluded that Negroes were excluded from the decision-making committees of the ASCS and from employment in ASCS county offices. Although there has been some improvement in the situation as a result of ASCS's attempts to remedy the situation, the Alabama State Advisory Committee concludes that Negroes continue to be excluded from ASCS committees and from employment in ASCS offices and that Negroes continue to be denied the full benefits of ASCS programs. It is the State Advisory Committee's firm belief that this vicious circle of exclusion, though somewhat modified, continues to exist. It must be eliminated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Alabama State Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights believes there are serious deficiencies in the administration of ASCS in the Alabama Black Belt. It further believes that the recommendations made by the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights in its 1965 report--to end discriminatory practices which have barred Negro farmers from the services and benefits of farm programs; to assure Negroes the opportunity to participate in elections for local committees and appointment to committees; and to require that employment be without regard to race--are still applicable.

In addition, the Committee recommends to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights that it urge the Department of Agriculture and the ASCS to:

1. Vigorously enforce its equal employment opportunity policy; supervise the implementation of its instructions that training classes for prospective minority group employees on both the professional and clerical level be developed.
2. Conduct training programs in intergroup relations for State and county committeemen and staff in Alabama.
3. Abolish the all-Negro State Advisory Committee and enlarge the State committee to include persons who are sensitive to the needs of the Negro and the poor farmers.
4. Revise the election procedures so that nominations will be made only by petition and representation on the committees will reflect the racial and economic composition of the community.

5. Initiate a program aimed at achieving maximum benefits from ASCS for the poor farmers, both Negro and white. Alternatives to the present check assignment system should be sought. Where farmers choose to leave the land, they should be assisted in the transition process.

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Appendix 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE
OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 22, 1965

To: Chairmen, State ASC Committees

From: Administrator

Subject: Policies on Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights

ASCS has made considerable progress in the area of equal opportunity and civil rights in recent months. However, the pace is much too slow. As I stated in my recent memorandum to you transmitting excerpts from the Civil Rights Commission Report and statements by the President and the Secretary, our organization is dedicated to the elimination of any discrimination of any kind that may exist in the administration of ASCS Programs.

In order to carry out this commitment, the following policies will be applied in connection with our State and County operations:

1. Recommend appointment of a Negro to fill the first vacancy that occurs on the Committee for any State where Negroes constitute more than 10% of the total farmers in the State.
2. Provide equal employment opportunities in the State and county offices during this and succeeding years. Full consideration will be given to the previous imbalance of employment which has prevailed. In each State the goal will be to achieve a minority group employment percentage equal to the percentage of non-white farmers in the State. Major progress will be made this summer in the temporary county employment of Negroes as field and office employees. (Estimates indicate 2,806 temporary office employees and 12,828 temporary performance reporters will be required this summer in the 15 Southern States covered by the Civil Rights Commission Report.)
3. Establish in each of the States of Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, North

Appendix 11

PERCENT NEGRO FARM OPERATORS, AVERAGE VALUE OF FARM PRODUCTS SOLD, AND PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH INCOME OF LESS THAN \$3,000.00, 1964

County	Percent Negro Farm Operators	Average Value of Farm Products Sold (in dollars)	Percent of Households with Incomes less than \$3,000
Dallas	74.4	\$4,409	75.2
Greene	76.7	2,969	78.6
Hale	62.5	5,543	71.5
Lowndes	65.5	5,329	66.1
Sumter	74.3	2,728	71.7
Wilcox	71.5	2,816	78.9
Total	71.3	3,978	73.8

Appendix 12

VALUE OF ASCS PROGRAM AND AVERAGE PER FARM OPERATOR IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES, 1966

County	Amount (in dollars)	Average Per Farm Operator (in dollars)
Dallas	\$1,935,299	\$937
Greene	936,145	682
Hale	1,235,116	848
Lowndes	908,732	627
Sumter	1,127,057	740
Wilcox	831,701	565
Total	6,974,050	757

Appendix 10

NUMBER OF FARM OPERATORS, BY TENURE AND BY RACE,
SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

County	Total Per- cent Negro Operators	Owners			Part Owners			Tenants		
		White	Negro	%	White	Negro	%	White	Negro	%
Dallas	74.4	299	347	53.7	169	145	46.2	53	1045	95.2
Greene	76.7	169	213	55.8	104	148	58.7	43	690	91.1
Hale	62.5	336	373	52.6	145	176	54.8	64	361	84.9
Lowndes	65.5	263	242	47.9	143	131	53.0	56	531	90.2
Sumter	74.3	205	244	54.3	140	186	57.1	42	702	94.4
Wilcox	71.5	242	295	54.9	130	177	57.7	41	581	93.4
Totals		1514	1714	53.1	831	963	53.7	299	3910	92.9

Appendix 9

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

WILCOX COUNTY

NAME OF COMMUNITY	ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING					
	1966					
	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
A and M	104	69	71	125	73	91
B and T	80	69	55	126	84	105
CD and P	58	64	37	226	59	156
EF and G	187	61	114	385	60	231
H and O	119	71	84	186	77	143
IJQ and R	122	70	85	111	49	54
KLN and S	180	63	113	112	37	41
Total	850	65.8	559	1271	62.6	821

Appendix 9

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

WILCOX COUNTY

NAME OF COMMUNITY	ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING					
	1965					
	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
A and M	88	60	52	146	46	67
B and T	76	82	62	130	46	59
CD and P	59	66	38	257	53	136
EF and G	191	50	95	348	43	149
H and O	111	74	82	192	48	92
IJQ and R	123	77	94	139	40	55
KLN and S	175	52	91	106	17	18
Total	823	62.4	514	1318	43.7	576

Appendix 9

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

SUMTER COUNTY

NAME OF
COMMUNITY ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING

1966						
	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
One	106	63	66	135	52	70
Two	180	70	126	165	40	66
Three	117	66	77	244	45	109
Four	147	82	120	163	44	71
Five	116	76	88	285	48	136
Six	105	72	75	185	52	36
Total	771	72	552	1177	47	488

Appendix 9

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

SUMTER COUNTY

NAME OF COMMUNITY	ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING					
	1965					
	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
One	103	53	54	151	26	39
Two	162	59	95	212	23	48
Three	93	59	54	207	36	74
Four	147	50	73	150	31	46
Five	112	63	70	285	35	99
Six	98	68	66	248	47	116
Total	715	57.6	412	1253	34.7	422

Appendix 9

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

LOWNDES COUNTY

NAME OF COMMUNITY	ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING					
	1966					
	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
A (Beats 1, 2, & 20)	61	95	58	134	50	67
B (Beats 17, 18, & 19)	125	88	110	75	27	20
C (Beats 3, 4, & 13)	65	80	52	363	60	219
D (Beats 12, 14, 15, & 16)	213	86	183	239	34	81
E (Beats 5, 6, 7, 9, & 21)	134	84	113	111	26	29
F (Beats 8, 10, & 11)	216	66	143	64	34	22
Total	814	82	659	986	48	438

Appendix 9

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

LOWNDES COUNTY

NAME OF COMMUNITY	ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING					
	1965					
	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
A (Beats 1, 2, & 20)	61	87	53	164	42	68
B (Beats 17, 18 & 19)	137	90	123	101	32	32
C (Beats 3, 4, & 13)	66	83	54	392	53	207
D (Beats 12, 14, 15, & 16)	206	88	181	260	35	91
E (Beats 5, 6, 7, 9, & 21)	122	72	87	157	24	37
F (Beats 8, 10, & 11)	208	67	139	71	44	31
Total	800	80	637	1145	41	466

Appendix 9

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

HALE COUNTY

NAME OF COMMUNITY	ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING					
	1966					
	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
Community A	186	63	117	135	49	66
Community B	374	55	205	637	40	254
Community C	94	52	48	221	39	86
Community D	96	52	49	180	30	54
Community E	184	39	71	86	55	47
Total	934	52	490	1259	40.3	507

Appendix 9

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

HALE COUNTY

NAME OF
COMMUNITY ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING

1965

	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
Community A	174	75	130	126	33	41
Community B	391	69	269	588	32	188
Community C	90	68	61	209	35	73
Community D	101	57	57	181	29	52
Community E	181	56	101	104	45	46
Total	937	66	618	1208	33	400

Appendix 9

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

GREENE COUNTY

NAME OF COMMUNITY	ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING					
	1966					
	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
Eutaw & Springfield	163	93	151	200	28	56
Forkland	63	95	59	252	39	98
Boligee & Tishabee	82	85	69	308	44	132
West Greene, Pl. Ridge Mount Hebron	64	89	56	137	50	68
Lewiston, Jena & Mantua	40	93	36	82	60	49
Clinton	59	92	53	112	55	60
Union	58	97	55	73	21	14
Knoxville	44	93	40	40	20	8
Total	573	91	519	1204	41	485

Appendix 9

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

GREENE COUNTY

NAME OF COMMUNITY	ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING					
	1965					
	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
Eutaw & Springfield	163	97	158	180	32	57
Forkland	64	92	58	285	30	85
Boligee & Tishabee	87	98	85	359	43	154
West Greene, Pl. Ridge Mount Hebron	54	89	48	169	40	67
Lewiston, Jena & Mantua	40	90	36	96	66	63
Clinton	45	96	42	134	66	88
Union	60	82	49	55	67	36
Knoxville	47	91	42	27	44	11
Total	560	93	518	1305	43	561

Appendix 9

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

DALLAS COUNTY

NAME OF
 COMMUNITY ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING

1966

	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
One	138	43	59	143	57	81
Two	292	84	245	478	34	162
Three	197	83	163	448	31	138
Four	229	85	194	292	79	230
Five	270	67	180	361	75	270
Six	94	64	60	203	50	101
Total	1220	73.8	901	1925	51	982

Appendix 9.

COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELIGIBLE VOTERS,
NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING FOR 1965 AND 1966
IN SIX ALABAMA COUNTIES

DALLAS COUNTY

NAME OF COMMUNITY	ELIGIBLE VOTERS, NUMBER AND PERCENT VOTING					
	1965					
	White	Percent Voting	Number Voting	Negro	Percent Voting	Number Voting
One	140	56	78	150	25	37
Two	296	65	192	541	26	140
Three	195	68	132	457	19	86
Four	173	75	129	303	68	206
Five	275	58	159	415	28	116
Six	96	62	59	209	35	73
Total	1175	63.7	749	2075	31.7	658

P. 3

Alabama State ASCS Committee

- 2- List of Eligible ASCS Voters-1967-Macon County, Alabama (the F. S. N. list);
- 3- The certification envelopes bearing signatures adjudged by the County Committee on 9-25-67 as invalid;
- 4- All documents, records and papers bearing the signatures referred to in item 3 above;
- 5- The envelopes containing ballots which were returned by the U. S. Post Office because of improper addresses;
- 6- The "addressograph" plates for those voters whose ballots were returned by the U. S. Post Office;
- 7- Any and all documents, records and papers which contain the address information which was transferred to either the addressograph plates referred to in item 5 above or which were used to manually address those election envelopes referred to in 5 above;
- 8- All certificates indicating multi-ownership of land and bearing such language as "this certifies that my name is on the deed of conveyance for some land covered under F. S. N."
- 9- The list of all persons participating in any Macon County ASCS programs in 1967 including, but not limited to, persons receiving payments due to said participation.

Very truly yours,

Alabama State ASCS Committee

2- Ballots were disqualified or "thrown out" for such reasons as illegibility of signatures and improper spelling of signatures in violation of Rules and Regulations of the United States Department of Agriculture as well as the intent of the USDA and the Congress of the United States. It is further submitted that the County Office ignored similar violations by white voters.

3- The County Office violated Part 1, Section 3, Paragraph 22 of ASCS Handbook 7-CA dated 5-17-66 (which prohibits partisan ASCS election activities by ASCS employees) in the following particulars:

- A- In using special lists of those who did (and did not) vote to aggressively solicit whites who had not voted to turn in their ballots (without similar efforts to solicit Negroes to vote);
- B- In encouraging and soliciting whites to become eligible for more than one vote per piece of land and providing the expertise and knowledge to accomplish same (without similar efforts with Negro landowners);
- C- In once again ignoring large numbers of potential Negro voters eligible to participate in ASCS elections but not placed on the eligibility list by the County Office;
- D- In nominating four to six Negroes in addition to Negro candidates already nominated by petition to make a total of nine (9) or more Negro candidates on each ballot in each contested community. This was done to "Split" the Negro vote while the white vote was solidified by the nomination of the minimum (three) for whites (who had no petitioned candidates) in these communities;
- E- In failing to safeguard the returned ballots (in violation of Part 4, Section 3, Paragraph 46 of 7-CA) by failing to properly seal the ballot boxes. (IN Macon County, a metal box with a lock, plus tape and a date written on the tape constituted the seal. Needless to say the county office had both the key to the lock and additional tape. The above constituted no safeguard within the meaning of this Section).

For the above reasons and others, we ask that the results of both the Macon County ASCS Community Committee elections and the 1967 ASCS County Convention be set aside and new elections scheduled not less than thirty (30) days after announcement of new elections.

We further request that the following documents be impounded and preserved by the Macon County ASCS County Committee and be made available to us:

- 1- List of Eligible ASCS Voters-1967-Macon County, Alabama (the alphabetical list);

LETTER APPEALING RESULTS OF 1967
MACON COUNTY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Appendix 8

October 7, 1967
303-A Foster Street
Auburn, Ala. 36830

The Alabama State ASCS Committee
Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture
The Aronov Building
Montgomery, Alabama
Attn: Mr. Fred M. Acuff

Dear Sirs:

The undersigned hereby appeal from the results of the Community Committee elections (ballots counted September 25, 1967) in Macon County, Alabama in Communities 1, 2 and 4* and the corresponding election of the one white County Committeeman and the two white alternates to the County Committee.

The following violations of ASCS election procedures resulted in the defeat of a sufficient number of Negro candidates from Communities 1, 2 and 4 to once again prevent the honest election of a Negro County Committee member. Our present information indicates that a mere addition of eight (8) votes in Community One, nine (9) votes in Community Two and eighteen (18) votes in Community Four (or a total of 35 votes in the entire county) would have provided enough Negro delegates to the County Convention for election of a Negro County Committeeman at the County Convention. All information will be fully substantiated once we have had full access to ASCS county records.

Upon information and belief:

1- Envelopes which were improperly addressed containing ballots were returned by the U. S. Post Office to the staff of the ASCS Macon County Office ("COUNTY OFFICE") who made no reasonable efforts to locate these voters in spite of the fact that most of the ballots were returned on September 11, 1967 (eight (8) days before the deadline for return of ballots). As a result of a large number of eligible voters were disenfranchised.

*Please be advised that similar irregularities occurred in Communities 3 and 5 but are not under contest at this time. However, these irregularities shall be used as evidence to establish the pattern hereinafter described.

County	Percent Negro Operators	Regular Committeemen					Alternate Committeemen				
		1964 Total	1964	1965	1966	1967	1964 Total	1964	1965	1966	1967
Monroe	45.0	48	0	2	3	3	32	0	2	12	14
Montgomery	44.5	21	0	0	0	1	14	0	1	2	2
Perry	61.0	18	0	1	1	2	12	0	1	1	1
Pickens	43.1	33	0	0	1	2	22	0	2	0	0
Pike	23.8	33	0	0	0	2	22	0	0	0	0
Russell	66.3	15	0	0	0	0	10	0	10	10	10
Sumter	74.3	18	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	1
Talladega	26.9	33	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	0	0
Wilcox	71.5	21	0	3	7	2	14	0	9	7	13
Totals		624	0	11	23	22	416	0	73	75	83

REGULAR AND ALTERNATE NEGRO COMMUNITY COMMITTEEMEN
26 ALABAMA COUNTIES
1964-1967

Appendix 7

County	Percent Negro Operators	Regular Committeemen					Alternate Committeemen				
		1964 Total	1964	1965	1966	1967	1964 Total	1964	1965	1966	1967
Autauga	34.6	18	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0
Barbour	40.0	15	0	0	0	0	10	0	1	0	0
Bullock	62.9	15	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	1	1
Butler	31.0	21	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0
Chambers	34.4	18	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	2	0
Choctaw	50.1	36	0	1	0	1	24	0	11	7	8
Clarke	42.5	33	0	1	4	1	22	0	1	5	4
Conecuh	33.7	30	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0
Dallas	74.4	18	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0
Elmore	26.5	21	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0
Greene	76.7	24	0	0	1	1	16	0	1	1	1
Hale	62.5	15	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0
Henry	28.7	30	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0
Lee	40.9	27	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	1
Lowndes	65.5	18	0	3	3	3	12	0	8	4	3
Macon	72.4	15	0	0	3	4	10	0	10	8	8
Marengo	62.3	30	0	0	0	0	20	0	16	15	16

6. Literature - The election leaflet, "Vote for Farmers of Your Choice," is being revised and will be made available through ASCS county offices to all farmers in counties with 100 or more minority group farmers. This leaflet will also be sent to leaders of civil rights organizations, minority group farm organizations, minority group farm organizations, Negro rural ministers and others in the South.
7. Posters - Again this year, we will prepare and distribute posters to call attention to the election and the final date for ballots to be in. These posters will be displayed in those counties with 10 percent or more minority group farmers.
8. Conventions - In a number of Southern States where district church conventions will attract sizable numbers of minority group people, an effort will be made to set up our roto-photo showing of the slide set and narration on election procedures. These conventions are usually held in rural-oriented communities and are attended by many farm people.

SPECIAL ASCS ELECTION PLANS FOR STATES
WITH 10% OR MORE MINORITY GROUP FARMERS

1. News Media - To the extent possible, county offices will publicize in local newspapers and over radio and television the dates and other important information about ASC elections.
2. County Office Communication - All county offices will inform all farmers of record, well in advance of the election date, of the community boundaries and their right to nominate by petition. A second letter to the farmer will include (1) the ballot, (2) voting instructions, (3) notice of time and place for both the ballot counting and the county convention, and (4) explanation that both the ballot counting and the county convention are open to the public.
3. Public Meeting - Require states to instruct those counties where 10 percent or more of the farmers are minority group members to hold at least one public county meeting, giving special emphasis to explaining ASC election procedures and answering questions on ASC elections. Additionally, I have asked that county offices be encouraged to hold other meetings in special areas of the county when this is deemed necessary and feasible.
4. Informing Civil Rights Organizations, Farm Organizations, Rural Ministers and Others of ASC Elections - A letter from the Administrator, ASCS will be sent to heads of these local groups and others as appropriate, informing them about changes in ASCS election procedures, and enlisting their support in bringing these changes to the attention of minority group farmers.
5. Visual Aids
 - a. The slide set and narration on election of ASC community committeemen is being reviewed and will be made available for showings by fieldmen and county office staffs in counties with a sizeable proportion of minority group farmers.
 - b. The slide set and narration on ASC elections will also be available to civic, social, farm and civil rights groups requesting them. To the extent possible, ASCS personnel will be available to assist these groups in showing and explaining the slide set on ASC elections.

15. A special slide series has been developed for local use to explain voting procedure.
16. A special hand out has been prepared explaining elections and how they operate.
17. Special training sessions on elections are conducted at the local levels in all of the southern States.
18. During elections, special assistance is given in elections to minority group voters by ASCS employees at both the county and State levels.

7. Procedure was changed to require that any place where voting or tabulating of ballots is done, it must be open to the public without restriction of any of its facilities because of race, creed, color, or national origin.
8. The slate of nominees for community committeemen established by the nominating committee must contain minority race nominees in the same proportion that they are to the total farm population (owners, operator, tenants, and sharecroppers).
9. Requires that tabulation of ballots and the county convention will be in a place sufficiently large to accommodate all interested farmers who might reasonably be expected to attend. (Increased space is to encourage minority group attendance.)
10. A special certification has been added to the election ballot envelope to insure the voter voted his own ballot. It also includes a provision for those who sign by mark.
11. A form has been developed for signature of a nominee to indicate his willingness to serve if elected and his willingness to settle a tie vote by lot.
12. Incumbent committeemen who become candidates for reelection are not permitted to continue performing election duties other than to assist in determining eligibility to vote and hold office.
13. It is made clear that no person shall be denied the right to vote or hold office because of race, creed, color, or national origin.
14. The slate of community committee nominees established by community and county committees must be not less than 6 or more than 10. This is to have a minimum number and yet avoid flooding the ballot with any particular race.

ELECTION PROCEDURES - CIVIL RIGHTS

Following are changes in election procedure placed into effect in recent years which have a direct effect on civil rights.

1. Each eligible voter of record must be mailed a notice of the date, time, and place of the election. This individual notice is in addition to the required regular public notice.
2. County employees when visiting a farm are required to obtain data on all persons who have an interest in the farm as owner, operator, tenant, or sharecropper. This information adds to and updates the list of eligible voters in the county.
3. Each eligible voter of record must be mailed a notice of his right to nominate by petition candidates for membership on the community committee. This individual notice is in addition to the required regular public notice.
4. The number of signers to a petition to nominate a farmer as a candidate for community committee membership was reduced from ten to six. This was to make it easier for minority groups to nominate persons of their choice.
5. In polling place elections, procedure was changed to require community committee election ballots to be publicly tabulated immediately after the polling place closes for voting and immediately following tabulation, that they be delivered to the county office.
6. Emphasis has been placed on the use of mail elections in southern States in order to make voting easier for minority group farmers.

COUNTY	REGULAR						LIMITED					
	1964		1966		1967		1964		1966		1967	
	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N
Marengo					1		10		12	4	1	
Monroe	1		1		1		8		8	2	8	1
Montgomery	1		1		1		8		7	2		
Perry	1		1		1		8		6	1	2	
Pickens							17		21		6	
Pike	1		1		1		8		8	3	5	
Russell	1		1		1		5		6	1	2	
Sumter	1		1		1		7		12	6	1	
Talladega							14		5	2	2	
Wilcox	1		1		1		6		1	3	1	
TOTAL	19		22		22		213		178	40	88	10

FIELD
ASCS COUNTY OFFICE EMPLOYMENT
BY RACE for DECEMBER 31, 1964, 1966, and 1967

COUNTY	REGULAR						LIMITED					
	1964		1966		1967		1964		1966		1967	
	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N
Autauga			1		1		6		6			
Barbour	1		1				6		6		5	1
Bullock	1		1		1		11		5	1		
Butler	1		1		1		10		9	2	10	
Chambers			1		1		5		3	2	3	2
Choctaw									4	1	1	
Clarke	1		1		1		5		2	1	1	3
Conecuh	1		1		1		13		1			
Dallas	1		1		1		12		11	2	8	2
Elmore	1		1		1		11		10	1	3	
Greene	1		1		1		3		2		4	
Hale	1		1		1		10		15	1	7	1
Henry	1		1		1		8		5	1	3	
Lee			1		1		7		6	2	4	
Lowndes	1		1		1		8		5	2	5	
Macon	1		1		1		7		2		6	

COUNTY	REGULAR						LIMITED							
	1964		1966		1967		1964		1966		1967			
	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N		
Marengo	6		5		6		2		2		1		1	
Monroe	4		6		6		3		1		2		1	3
Montgomery	4		4		4		3		3				2	
Perry	4		4	1	4	1	3		3		1			
Pickens	5		5	1	5	1	1		4				1	
Pike	6		6		7		3		4		1		2	
Russell	4		4	1	4	1	2		1				2	
Sumter	4		4		5	1	4		8		2		4	
Talladega	5		4		5		4				2		4	2
Wilcox	5		4		5		1		3					
TOTAL	126		121	6	130	7	50		57		24		35	24

Appendix 3

OFFICE
ASCS COUNTY OFFICE EMPLOYMENT
BY RACE for DECEMBER 31, 1964, 1966, and 1967

COUNTY	REGULAR						LIMITED					
	1964		1966		1967		1964		1966		1967	
	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N
Autauga	5		5		5		1		1	1		
Barbour	6		6		8		1		1	1	1	1
Bullock	5		4		4		1		1			1
Butler	5		5		6		2		3	1		1
Chambers	4		4		4		2		1	1	1	1
Choctaw	4		5		5		1		1		2	1
Clarke	5		4		5		1				2	3
Conecuh	6		6		4							1
Dallas	5		4	1	6		2		4		3	
Elmore	6		5		5		1		1	3	1	1
Greene	5		4	1	3	1	1		4	1	3	
Hale	4		5		5		3		4	2	3	1
Henry	6		6	1	6	1	2		1	1	2	
Lee	4		4		4		3		2	2		2
Lowndes	4		4		4		2		3	1	2	2
Macon	5		4		4	1	1		1	1	1	1

2. In consultation with the State Advisory Committee select 6 or more of the most promising for six months of comprehensive training in ASCS operations.
3. Training will be under direct supervision of the State Training Officer with assistance from all program specialists in their line of operations. The first 4 months will be in the State Office Training Center. The last 2 months will be in a selected county office. (One trainee per county)
4. Training will be systematic and controlled beginning with fundamentals and advancing into ASCS operations along the lines most suited to the probable type of employment.
5. Before training is started, the State office shall develop a detailed training schedule which outlines day by day the topics to be discussed, the specialist to lead discussion, and the time allotted. This schedule will also provide the time and topic for personal study by the trainees. It will also include any other items needed to round out a complete training program.
6. Salary will be the beginning step of CO-2 and paid from county administrative funds on a reimbursable basis.
7. Before being accepted for this program, trainees must agree in writing to the conditions of the training plan including the last 2 months in a selected county office and including a provision that they will accept employment in any county office in the State to which employment is available. However, it must be clear to all that this training does not in itself guarantee permanent employment.

This plan can be a positive step toward our having better qualified applicants available in the quantity and at the time needed to fill vacancies and keep work current. The plan is to be continuous and I ask you to personally take the necessary steps to see that it is well understood in the State and county offices and that arrangements are made to have the first group of 6 or more trainees to begin training by August 1, 1966. Please give us a report on or about that date as to your progress in accomplishing this objective.

I will be glad to further discuss this with you at any time you may have need for clarifying information.

signed/ John B. Vance

June 23, 1966

To: Chairman, ASC State Committee

Alabama
Georgia
North Carolina
South Carolina
Tennessee

From: Director, Southeast Area, ASCS

Subject: Plan for Training and Developing Minority Group Members
for ASCS Employment

The progress we have made together in the field of civil rights and equal employment opportunity in ASCS is certainly encouraging. I take this opportunity to again express my sincere appreciation to you, your committee, and staff for the untiring personal efforts which each has put forth in that undertaking. I am well aware that these efforts are made even more impressive by the fact that each of you have at the same time successfully maintained a severe program workload operated under many urgent time deadlines and further complicated by new inter-acting program provisions. There could be no better evidence of loyalty and devotion to our concept of program operation and service to farmers.

Although we have made much progress in meeting our equal employment goals, we still have a long way to go. The main difficulty has been the lack of available qualified non-white clerical employees to fill vacancies. To overcome this, a plan has been developed in keeping with the agency equal employment policy which will ensure an active and systematic approach to achieving minority group employment goals in State and county offices. I believe this plan will in the long run be more economical than our present constant attempts to recruit and if properly implemented it will eliminate much of the trouble we now experience by work being delayed while trying to get a vacancy filled. The plan is as follows and it is requested that you move as rapidly as possible in getting it underway in your State:

1. The State committee and/or Executive Director with one or more members of the State Advisory Committee meet with school administrators, ministers, business leaders, and others as applicable, to develop a roster of potentially good non-white clerical employees.

indicating any special problems you expect to encounter together with suggested solutions.

Your cooperation and assistance in faithfully carrying out these policies carefully and expeditiously are invited and expected.

Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, an advisory committee of capable Negroes to assist the ASC State Committee in assuring:

- a. Equal employment opportunities at both State and county levels,
 - b. Equal opportunity to participate in ASCS Programs,
 - c. Full participation in community and county committee elections, both as voters and candidates.
Advisory Committees recommended to the Secretary will have a membership numbering not more than the State Committee and comprised of Negro educators, businessmen, ministers, and farmers.
4. Establish a system of record-keeping in county offices in the 15 Southern States of the extent to which Negroes participate in and benefit from ASCS programs as compared with whites. These data will be used as the foundation for surveys of individual producers, to determine whether they had an equal opportunity with all others to benefit from the farm programs.
 5. County committees will place on the ballot for community committee elections the names of Negro candidates in at least the same proportion as there are Negro farmers in the county.
 6. Re-negotiate arrangements for office space to avoid segregation of employees or discrimination in the use of facilities. Where this cannot be done, arrange for space where equal opportunities can be provided.
 7. Be prepared to take over the operation of any county office which does not operate in line with these goals and objectives or which you determine cannot or will not get the work done.
 8. Plans for presenting these goals and policies to the county committees and the county office managers must be developed and carried out immediately.
 9. A written report must be prepared and forwarded to your Area Director not later than April 10, 1965, indicating a plan and time table for achieving these goals this year, and