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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of Tribal Relations

Council for Native American Farming and Ranching Meeting

AGENCY: Office of Tribal Relations, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a forthcoming meeting of The Council for Native American Farming and Ranching (CNAFR), a public advisory committee of the Office of Tribal Relations (OTR). Notice of the meetings are provided in accordance with section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, (5 U.S.C. Appendix 2).

This will be the first meeting held during fiscal year 2016 and will consist of, but not be limited to: hearing public comments, update of USDA programs and activities, and discussion of committee priorities. This meeting will be open to the public.

DATES: The meeting will be held on December 8, 2015, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and December 9, 2015, 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be open to the public on both days. Note that a period for public comment will be held on December 8, 2015, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Flamingo Hotel, 3555 S. Las Vegas Boulevard, Las Vegas, Nevada 89109, in the Laughlin II Room.

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Written comments may be submitted to: the CNAFR Contact Person, Dana Richey, Designated Federal Officer, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Administrator, USDA/Farm Service Agency, 1400 Independence Ave., SW.,

Whitten Bldg., 501–A, Washington, DC 20250; by Fax: (202) 720-1058; or by email:
Dana.Richey@wdc.usda .gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions should be directed to Dana Richey, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Administrator, USDA/Farm Service Agency, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Whitten Bldg., 501-A, Washington, DC 20250; by Fax: (202) 720-1058 or email: Dana.Richey@wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended (5 U.S.C. App. 2), USDA established an advisory council for Native American farmers and ranchers. The CNAFR is a discretionary advisory committee established under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture, in furtherance of the *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* settlement agreement that was granted final approval by the District Court for the District of Columbia on April 28, 2011.

The CNAFR will operate under the provisions of the FACA and report to the Secretary of Agriculture. The purpose of the CNAFR is (1) to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on issues related to the participation of Native American farmers and ranchers in USDA farm loan programs; (2) to transmit recommendations concerning any changes to Farm Service Agency regulations or internal guidance or other measures that would eliminate barriers to program participation for Native American farmers and ranchers; (3) to examine methods of maximizing the number of new farming and ranching opportunities created by USDA farm loan programs through enhanced extension and financial literacy services; (4) to examine methods of encouraging intergovernmental cooperation to mitigate the effects of land tenure and probate issues on the delivery of

USDA farm loan programs; (5) to evaluate other methods of creating new farming or ranching opportunities for Native American producers; and (6) to address other related issues as deemed appropriate.

The Secretary of Agriculture selected a diverse group of members representing a broad spectrum of persons interested in providing solutions to the challenges of the aforementioned purposes. Equal opportunity practices were considered in all appointments to the CNAFR in accordance with USDA policies. The Secretary selected the members in August 2014.

Interested persons may present views, orally or in writing, on issues relating to agenda topics before the CNAFR. Written submissions may be submitted to the contact person on or before November 30, 2015. Oral presentations from the public will be heard from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on December 8, 2015. Those individuals interested in making formal oral presentations should notify the contact person and submit a brief statement of the general nature of the issue they wish to present and the names and addresses of proposed participants by November 30, 2015. All oral presentations will be given three (3) to five (5) minutes depending on the number of participants.

The OTR will also make the agenda available to the public via the OTR Web site <http://www.usda.gov/tribalrelations> no later than 10 business days before the meeting and at the meeting. The minutes from the meeting will be posted on the OTR website. OTR welcomes the attendance of the public at the CNAFR meetings and will make every effort to accommodate persons with physical disabilities or special needs. If you require special accommodations due to a disability, please notify the Contact Person, at least 10 business days in advance of the meeting.

Leslie Wheelock,
Director,
Office of Tribal Relations.

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