

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Research Service

Notice of Intent To Extend a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Agricultural Research Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 109-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), this notice announces the Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of USDA's Biological Control Documentation Program dealing with documenting the importation and release of foreign biological control agents.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by June 20, 1997, to be assured of consideration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS: Contact Jack R. Coulson, Director, ARS Biological Control Documentation Center, Insect Biocontrol Laboratory, Plant Sciences Institute, ARS, USDA, National Agricultural Library, 4th Floor, 10301 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705-2330, (301) 504-6350.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: USDA Biological Shipment Record—Record of Shipment of Exotic Microorganisms for Biological Control (AD-944); Release of Exotic Microorganisms for Biological Control (AD-944A).

OMB Number: 0518-0017.

Expiration Date of Current Approval: October 31, 1997.

Type of Request: Intent to extend the currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The purpose of the Biological Control Documentation Program is to record the importation (AD-944) and field release (AD-944A) of foreign/introduced beneficial microorganisms (biological control). The information collected is entered into the USDA "Releases of Beneficial Organisms in the United States and Territories" (ROBO) database, established in 1984. It is a cooperative program among USDA and other federal agencies, state governmental agencies, and U.S. universities. The use of the forms and the information provided is voluntary. The program is for the benefit of biological control research and action agency personnel, taxonomists, federal and state regulatory agencies, agricultural administrators, and the general public. Efforts are underway to replace the paper forms with computerized information collection, and when completed, the forms would be used only by those units for which computerized input is not possible. This information collection is due to expire on October 31, 1997. ARS intends to request an extension of three years.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1/12 hour per response.

Non-Federal Respondents: Non-profit institutions, universities, and state and local governments.

Estimated Number of Non-Federal Respondents: 20.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: An average of 3 (range 1-10).

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 5 hours.

Copies of the 2 forms used in this information collection can be obtained from Jack R. Coulson, ARS Biological Control Documentation Center, at (301) 504-6350.

Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the

burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: Jack R. Coulson, Director, ARS Biological Control Documentation Center, Insect Biocontrol Laboratory, Plant Sciences Institute, ARS, USDA, National Agricultural Library, 4th Floor, 10301 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705-2350.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Signed at Beltsville, MD, March 25, 1997.

A. Rick Bennett,

Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of International Research Programs, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

[FR Doc. 97-9860 Filed 4-15-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-03-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Consumer Service

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request—Tracking Nutrition Security Changes: State Choices and the National Food Stamp Program

AGENCY: Food and Consumer Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Food and Consumer Service's intention to request Office of Management and Budget approval of the Tracking Nutrition Security Changes Study.

DATES: Written comments on this notice must be received by June 16, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be

collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: Michael E. Fishman, Acting Director, Office of Analysis and Evaluation, Food and Consumer Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Requests for additional information or copies of the proposed information collection forms should be directed to Michael E. Fishman, (703) 305-2117.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Tracking Nutrition Security Changes: State Choices and the National Food Stamp Program.

OMB Number: Not yet assigned.

Expiration Date: Not applicable.

Type of Request: New collection of information.

Abstract: The new welfare reform law, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, grants States a number of options in how they administer the Food Stamp Program. The Tracking Nutrition Security Changes Study will provide the USDA Food and Consumer Service with information on the nature and extent of States' decisions since the passage of the new law. The study will collect and synthesize information on State choices, primarily in three programmatic areas: eligibility determination, benefit calculation, and work requirements. The study will also assess the variance of food stamp policy choices across States and the implementation of these choices at the local food stamp office level.

Information will be collected from States in two stages. First, descriptive information will be collected from all 50 State food stamp agencies by telephone interviews to identify the nature and scope of selected State food stamp choices. Next, on-site interviews with key informants will be conducted in 10 to 15 States. These data will be collected for a qualitative analysis of implementation issues and descriptions of specific agency practices.

Affected Public: State and local governments, State nonprofit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: One or two State food stamp officials will respond from each of the 50 States

for the telephone survey. An average of 20 State and local government and nonprofit officials in each of up to 15 States will respond to on-site interviews, for a maximum total of 300 on-site interview respondents.

Estimated Time per Response: Phone interviews will average 60 minutes per State. On-site interviews will average 90 minutes per respondent.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 500 hours.

Dated: April 7, 1997.

William E. Ludwig,

Administrator, Food and Consumer Service.

[FR Doc. 97-9741 Filed 4-15-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-30-U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Consumer Service

RIN 0584-AC54

Food Stamp Program: Maximum Allotments for Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and the Virgin Islands

AGENCY: Food and Consumer Service, USDA.

ACTION: General notice.

SUMMARY: By this notice, the Department of Agriculture is updating the maximum food stamp allotments for participating households in Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. These annual adjustments, required by law, take into account changes in the cost of food and statutory adjustments since the amounts were last calculated.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Margaret Werts Batko, Assistant Branch Chief, Certification Policy Branch, Program Development Division, Food and Consumer Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302, or telephone at (703) 305-2516.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Implementation

As required by Section 3(o) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (the Act), 7 U.S.C. 2012(o), State agencies should have implemented this action on October 1, 1996 based on advance notice of the new amounts. As required by regulations published at 47 FR 46485 (October 19, 1982), annual statutory adjustments to the maximum allotment levels, income eligibility standards, and deductions are issued by General Notices published in the **Federal Register** and not through rulemaking proceedings.

Executive Order 12866

This notice has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866 and therefore has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Executive Order 12372

The Food Stamp Program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.551. For the reasons set forth in the Final rule and related notice to 7 CFR Part 3015, Subpart V (48 FR 29916, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of Executive Order No. 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services has certified that this action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The action will increase the amount of money spent on food through increases in food stamp benefits. However, this money will be distributed among all eligible food stamp vendors, so the effect on any one vendor will not be significant.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This action does not contain reporting or record keeping requirements subject to review by OMB pursuant to the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 3507.

Background

Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) and Allotments

As provided for in Section 3(o) of the Act, the TFP is a plan for the consumption of foods of different types (food groups) that families might use to provide nutritious meals and snacks for family members. The plan provides for a diet required to feed a family of four persons consisting of a man and woman aged 20 to 50, a child 6 to 8 and a child 9 to 11. The cost of the TFP is adjusted monthly to reflect changes in the costs of the food groups.

The TFPs for Alaska and Hawaii are based on an adjusted average for the six-month period that ends with June 1996. Since the Bureau of Labor Statistics (the source of food price data) no longer publishes monthly information to compute Alaska and Hawaii TFPs, the adjusted average provides a proxy for actual June 1996 TFP costs. The adjusted average is equal to January-June 1996 TFP costs for Alaska and Hawaii increased by the average percentage difference between the cost of the TFP in Alaska and Hawaii in June