

institutions, public organizations and local or tribal governments.

Estimated Number of Respondents:
135,000

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: \$22,545

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Sam Spencer, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, Support Services Division, at (202) 720-9588.

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 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 Sam Spencer, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, Support Services Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, STOP 0743, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-0743. 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.

Dated: January 28, 1998.

Wally Beyer,

Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

Dated: January 30, 1998.

Dayton J. Watkins,

Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

Dated: February 3, 1998.

Jan E. Shadburn,

Administrator, Rural Housing Service.

Dated: February 6, 1998.

Keith Kelly,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

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BILLING CODE 3410-XY-U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Foreign Agricultural Service

RIN 0551-AA26

Announcement of the Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program for FY 1999

AGENCY: Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of funds for the Fiscal Year 1999 Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) Program.

DATES: All applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Savings Time, April 20, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-1042, (202) 720-4327.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) announces that applications are being accepted for participation in the Fiscal Year 1999 Cooperator program. The program is intended to create, expand and maintain foreign markets for United States agricultural commodities and products. FAS administers the Cooperator program and provides cost share assistance to eligible trade organizations to implement approved market development activities. Financial assistance under this program will be made available on a competitive basis and applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria contained herein.

Background

Under the Cooperator program, FAS enters into Market Development Project Agreements with nonprofit U.S. trade organizations. FAS enters into these agreements with those nonprofit U.S. trade organizations that have the broadest possible producer representation of the commodity being promoted and gives priority to those organizations that are nationwide in membership and scope. Program participants may not, during the term of their agreement with FAS, make export sales of the agricultural commodity being promoted or charge fees for facilitating an export sale if promotional activities designed to result in that specific sale are supported by Cooperator program funds.

Market Development Project Agreements involve the promotion of

agricultural commodities on a generic basis and, therefore, do not involve activities targeted directly toward individual consumers. Approved activities contribute to the maintenance or growth of demand for the agricultural commodities and generally address long-term foreign import constraints by focusing on matters such as:

- Reducing infra-structural or historical market impediments;
- Improving processing capabilities;
- Modifying codes and standards; and
- Identifying new markets or new applications or uses for the agricultural commodity or product in the foreign market.

Authority

The Cooperator program is authorized by Title VII of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, 7 U.S.C. 5721, *et seq.* Program regulations appear at 7 CFR part 1550.

Application Process

The FAS administers various agricultural export assistance programs, including the Cooperator program, the Market Access Program (MAP), Cochran Fellowships, the Emerging Markets Program, Section 108, and several Export Credit Guarantee programs. Until now, organizations interested in receiving assistance under any of these FAS-administered programs were asked to submit their requests at varying times throughout the year. In an effort to facilitate the strategic planning process of Cooperator program applicant organizations, as well as that of the Federal government, FAS has unified and simplified the application process for its agricultural export assistance programs.

Beginning with this announcement, organizations which are interested in applying for Cooperator program funds will have the opportunity to incorporate multiple requests for assistance into a single Unified Export Strategy (UES) proposal. The suggested UES format permits the submission of a consolidated and strategically coordinated proposal including not only Cooperator program applications, but also requests for assistance under virtually all other FAS marketing programs, financial assistance programs, and market access programs. The suggested UES framework encourages applicants to examine the constraints or barriers to trade they face, identify activities which would help overcome such impediments, consider the entire pool of complementary marketing tools and program resources, and establish realistic export goals.

The UES handbook, including the suggested format, instructions, and a sample application, may be obtained in a paper copy or on a diskette by contacting the Marketing Operations Staff at (202) 720-4327, or it can be downloaded from the FAS Home Page at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/ues/unified.html>.

In order to be considered for the Cooperator program, an applicant must submit to FAS information related to the allocation criteria considered by FAS as described in this notice. Incomplete applications and applications that do not otherwise conform to this announcement will not be accepted for review. Paper applications must be signed and submitted, via hand delivery or U.S. mail, in triplicate form (an original and two copies); electronic applications can be submitted via electronic mail, facsimile, or on a diskette. Anyone choosing to submit an application electronically must also submit, via hand delivery or U.S. mail, an original signed certification statement as included in the UES handbook. Any organization which is not interested in applying for the Cooperator program but would like to request assistance through one of the other programs mentioned should contact the Marketing Operations Staff at (202) 720-4327.

Review Process and Allocation Criteria

FAS allocates funds in a manner that effectively supports the strategic decision-making initiatives of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. In deciding whether a proposed project will contribute to the effective creation, expansion, or maintenance of foreign markets, FAS seeks to identify a clear, long-term agricultural trade strategy by market or product and a program effectiveness time line against which results can be measured at specific intervals using quantifiable product or country goals. These performance indicators are part of FAS' resource allocation strategy to fund applicants which can demonstrate performance based on a long-term strategic plan, consistent with the strategic objectives of the United States Department of Agriculture, and address the performance measurement objectives of the GPRA.

FAS considers a number of factors when reviewing proposed projects. These factors include:

- The ability of the organization to provide an experienced U.S.-based staff with technical and international trade expertise to ensure adequate

development, supervision, and execution of the proposed project;

- The organization's willingness to contribute resources, including cash and goods and services of the U.S. industry and foreign third parties;

- The conditions or constraints affecting the level of U.S. exports and market share for the agricultural commodities and products;

- The degree to which the proposed project is likely to contribute to the creation, expansion, or maintenance of foreign markets; and

- The degree to which the strategic plan is coordinated with other private or U.S. government-funded market development projects.

Following is a description of the FAS process for reviewing applications and the criteria for allocating available funds.

(1) Phase I—Sufficiency Committee Review

Applications received by the closing date will be reviewed by FAS to determine the eligibility of the applicants and the completeness of the applications.

(2) Phase 2—FAS Divisional Review

Applications which meet the application procedures will then be further evaluated by the applicable FAS Commodity Division. The Divisions will recommend funding levels for each applicant based on a review of the applications against the factors described above. The purpose of this review is to identify meritorious proposals and to suggest an appropriate funding level for each application based upon these factors.

(3) Phase 3—Competitive Review

Meritorious applications will then be passed on to the office of the Deputy Administrator, Commodity and Marketing Programs, for the purpose of allocating available funds among the applicants. Applications which pass the Divisional Review will compete for funds on the basis of the following allocation criteria (the number in parentheses represents a percentage weight factor). Data used in the calculations for contribution levels, past export performance and past demand expansion performance will cover not more than a 6-year period, to the extent such data is available.

(a) Contribution Level (40)

- The applicant's 6-year average share (1994-99) of all contributions (contributions may include cash and goods and services provided by U.S.

entities in support of foreign market development activities) compared to

- The applicant's 6-year average share (1994-99) of all Cooperator marketing plan budgets.

(b) Past Export Performance (20)

- The 6-year average share (1993-98) of the value of exports promoted by the applicant compared to

- The applicant's 6-year average share (1993-98) of all Cooperator marketing plan budgets plus a 6-year average share (1992-97) of MAP program ceiling levels and a 6-year average share (1992-97) of foreign overhead provided for collocation within a U.S. agricultural trade office.

(c) Past Demand Expansion Performance (20)

- The 6-year average share (1993-98) of the total value of world trade of the commodities promoted by the applicant compared to

- The applicant's 6-year average share (1993-98) of all Cooperator marketing plan budgets plus a 6-year average share (1992-97) of MAP program ceiling levels and a 6-year average share (1992-97) of foreign overhead provided for collocation within a U.S. agricultural trade office.

(d) Future Demand Expansion Goals (20)

(The criterion will receive a weight of 10 beginning with the year 2000 program.)

- The total dollar value of the applicant's projected increase in world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 2004 compared to
- The applicant's requested funding level.

(e) Accuracy of Past Demand Expansion Projections

(Since the information is not currently available, this criterion will be used beginning with the year 2000 program and will receive a weight of 10.)

- The actual dollar value share of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 1998 compared to
- The applicant's past projected share of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 1998, as specified in the 1998 Cooperator program application.

The Commodity Divisions' recommended program levels for each applicant are converted to a percent of the total Cooperator program funds available and multiplied by the total weight factor to determine the amount of funds allocated to each applicant.

Closing Date for Applications

Applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Savings Time, April 20, 1998 at the following address:

Hand Delivery (including FedEx, DHL, etc.): U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Marketing Operations Staff, Room 4932-S, 14th and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-1042
U.S. Postal Delivery: Marketing Operations Staff, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-1042

Electronic mail:

mosadmin@fas.usda.gov
Facsimile: (202) 720-9361

Lon Hatamiya,

Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service.

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BILLING CODE 3410-10-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Forest Service****South Manti Timber Salvage; Manti-La Sal National Forest, Sanpete and Sevier Counties, Utah**

AGENCY: Forest Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to document the analysis and disclose the environmental impacts of proposed actions to salvage harvest dead and dying timber, build roads, and restock some stands of trees in portions of the Muddy Creek, Twelvemile Creek, Sixmile Creek, and Ferron Creek Drainages. The project is located approximately 10 air miles southeast of Manti, Utah. This analysis is expected to coincide with Forest Service development of the interim rule "Administration of the Forest Development Transportation System: Temporary Suspension of Road Construction in Roadless Areas" (**Federal Register**, Vol. 63, No. 18, p. 4350-4351) and will consider effects on roadless and undeveloped character of areas involved and will comply with all policy in effect at the time of decision.

The need for the proposal is to: reduce the potential for large and intense wildfire across forested areas (with associated environmental effects), facilitate rapid reestablishment of Engelmann spruce through replanting of spruce in Timber Management Emphasis Units identified in the Manti-La Sal National Forest Land and Resource Plan, and recover some of the economic value of the dead and dying

trees. The proposed action involves harvest of up to approximately 31 million board feet (MMBF) of dead and dying Engelmann spruce from approximately 6,600 acres within an analysis area of approximately 25,000 acres. Harvest with both ground based and aerial (helicopter) methods would be used. Within the analysis area, approximately 10 miles of new road would be constructed, 20 miles of existing road reconstructed, and 23 miles of existing road would be used with appropriate maintenance to complete this harvest. Approximately 8 miles of road used for harvest operations would be closed and reclaimed following harvest.

The analysis area includes approximately 10,000 acres of Engelmann spruce-Subalpine fir vegetation type. A spruce bark beetle epidemic has moved through the area infesting spruce trees. As a consequence, most spruce trees over eight inches in diameter are dead or dying within the analysis area. In response to this epidemic mortality, approximately 25 MMBF of Engelmann spruce have previously been sold from approximately 2,450 acres within the analysis area.

Five areas that were identified as roadless during the RARE II inventory process are adjacent to and partly within the analysis area. The proposal does not include construction or reconstruction of any permanent or temporary roads within the RARE II areas. The proposed action includes harvest of approximately 7 MMBF Engelmann spruce using ground based and helicopter methods from three of these roadless areas.

DATES: Written comments concerning the scope of the analysis described in this Notice should be received on or before March 19, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Manti-La Sal National Forest, 599 West Price River Drive, Price, Utah 84501.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Questions concerning the proposed action and EIS should be addressed to Don Fullmer, Ecosystems Staff, Manti-La Sal National Forest, phone (435) 637-2817.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This EIS will tier to the final EIS for the Manti-La Sal National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). The Manti-La Sal Forest Plan provides the overall guidance (Goals, Objectives, Standards, and Management Area Direction) to achieve the Desired Future Condition for the area being analyzed, and contains specific management area prescriptions for the entire Forest. An Environmental

Assessment (EA) was prepared in 1996 for spruce timber sales in this analysis area. Six sales were offered and awarded in 1996 based on the analysis contained in the EA. In 1997 a decision was made to sell an additional 22 MMBF of dead, dying and at risk Engelmann spruce within the analysis area. That decision was not implemented. As a result of concerns raised and changes in condition (additional spruce mortality) which occurred after the EA was prepared, the decision was made to prepare an EIS for the project.

Scoping and issue development identified the following issues: land stability; soil erosion and productivity; air quality; water quality and quantity; riparian/wetlands; aquatic habitat; threatened, endangered and sensitive aquatic species; Forest health, diversity and productivity; rangeland vegetation; noxious weeds; threatened, endangered and sensitive terrestrial plant species; fuel loading and fire risk; transportation system, visitor safety, access and travel delays; range allotments and improvements; visual landscape; roadless character; cultural resources; economics; and energy.

The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from Federal, State, and local agencies as well as individuals and organizations who may be interested in, or affected by the proposed action. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on the issues related to the proposal and the area being analyzed. Information received will be used in preparation of the Draft EIS and Final EIS. For most effective use, comments should be submitted to the Forest Service within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**. Preparation of the EIS will include the following steps:

1. Define the purpose of and need for action.
2. Identify potential issues.
3. Eliminate issues of minor importance or those that were covered by previous, relevant environmental analysis.
4. Select issues to be analyzed in depth.
5. Identify reasonable alternatives to the proposed action.
6. Describe the affected environment.
7. Identify the potential environmental effects of the alternatives.

Steps 2, 3, and 4 will be completed through the scoping process.

Step 5 will consider a range of alternatives developed from the key issues. One of these will be the "No Action" alternative. Other alternatives