

in technical assistance to agricultural and rural producer groups interested in organizing a cooperative, and to emerging or developing co-ops, so they can: (a) Use sensible economic judgment, (b) determine co-op feasibility, (c) meet an economic need, (d) successfully operate on sound business principles and, (e) increase member income. In order to carry out the Agency's mission, RBS needs to collect information from the cooperative community.

The authority to carry out RBS mission is defined in the Cooperative Marketing Act of 1926 (44 Stat. 802-1926), and other regulations listed below.

Authority and Duties of Division (7 U.S.C. & 453)

(a) The division shall render service to associations of producers of agricultural products, and federations and subsidiaries thereof, engaged in the cooperative marketing of agricultural products, including processing, warehousing, manufacturing, storage, the cooperative purchasing of farm supplies, credit, financing, insurance, and other cooperative activities.

(b) The division is authorized:

(1) To acquire, analyze and disseminate economic, statistical, and historical information regarding the progress, organization, and business methods of cooperative associations in the United States and foreign countries.

(2) To conduct studies of the economic, legal, financial, social, and other phases of cooperation, and publish the results thereof. Such studies shall include the analyses of the organization, operation, financial, and merchandising problems of cooperative associations.

(3) To make surveys and analyses if deemed advisable of the accounts and business practices of representative cooperative associations upon their request; to report to the association so surveyed to results thereof, and with the consent of the association so surveyed to publish summaries of the results of such surveys, together with similar facts, for the guidance of cooperative associations and for the purpose of assisting cooperative associations in developing methods of business and market analysis.

(4) To confer and advise with committees or groups of producers, if deemed advisable, that may be desirous of forming a cooperative association and to make an economic survey and analysis of the facts surrounding the production and marketing of the agricultural product or products which

the association, if formed, would handle or market.

(5) To acquire from all available sources information concerning crop prospects, supply, demand, current receipts, exports, imports, and prices of the agricultural products handled or marketed by cooperative associations, and to employ qualified commodity marketing specialists to summarize and analyze this information and disseminate the same among cooperative associations, and others.

(6) To promote the knowledge of cooperative principles and practices and to cooperate, in promoting such knowledge, with educational and marketing agencies, cooperative associations, and others.

(7) To make such special studies, in the United States and foreign countries, and to acquire and disseminate such information and findings as may be useful in the development and practice of cooperation.

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

Respondents: Mainly producers of agricultural products in domestic market areas in which proposed cooperatives would be expected to market their member's products.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 245.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 245 hours per year.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Diana Wareham, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, at (202) 720-1975.

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 techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Diana Wareham, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, 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 become a matter of public record.

Dated: February 11, 1998.

Dayton J. Watkins,

Administrator, Rural Business—Cooperative Service.

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COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Agenda and Notice of Public Meeting of the Alabama Advisory Committee

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, that a meeting of the Alabama Advisory Committee to the Commission will convene at 6:00 p.m. and adjourn at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 1998, at the Christian Tutwiler Hotel, 2021 Park Place North, Birmingham, Alabama 32503. The purpose of the meeting is to plan future activities.

Persons desiring additional information, or planning a presentation to the Committee, should contact Melvin L. Jenkins, Director of the Central Regional Office, 913-551-1400 (TDD 913-551-1414). Hearing-impaired persons who will attend the meeting and require the services of a sign language interpreter should contact the Regional Office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

The meeting will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the Commission.

Dated at Washington, DC, February 6, 1998.

Carol-Lee Hurley,

Chief, Regional Programs Coordination Unit.

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COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Agenda and Notice of Public Meeting of the Nebraska Advisory Committee

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, that a meeting of the Nebraska Advisory Committee to the Commission will convene at 6:00 p.m. and adjourn at 8:00 p.m. on March 5, 1998, at the Double Tree Hotel, 1616 Dodge Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102. The purpose of the meeting is to plan future activities.

Persons desiring additional information, or planning a presentation to the Committee, should contact