

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.

## JOINT BOARD FOR THE ENROLLMENT OF ACTUARIES

### Renewal of Advisory Committee on Actuarial Examinations

**AGENCY:** Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries.

**ACTION:** Renewal of advisory committee.

**SUMMARY:** The Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries announces the renewal of the Advisory Committee on Actuarial Examinations.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Darryl Carter, 202-401-5845.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Joint Board on examinations in actuarial mathematics and methodology. The Joint Board administers such examinations in discharging its statutory mandate to enroll individuals who wish to perform actuarial services with respect to pension plans subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974. The Committee's advisory functions will include, but will not necessarily be limited to: (1) considering areas of actuarial knowledge that should be treated on the examinations; (2) developing examination questions; (3) recommending proposed examinations and pass marks; and (4), as requested by the Joint Board, making recommendations relative to the examination program.

Dated: October 2, 1998.

**Paulette Tino,**

*Chairman, Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Farm Service Agency

#### National Food and Agriculture Council; Request for Approval of a New Information Collection

**AGENCY:** Farm Service Agency, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13), this notice announces the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) intent to request approval of a new information collection in support of the USDA's National Food and Agriculture Council's (FAC) customer service initiative.

**DATES:** Submit written comments on the collection of information by December 18, 1998, to be assured consideration.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS:** Contact Leonard Covelto, Quality Customer Service Team Leader, Service Center Implementation Team, Farm Service Agency (FSA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), STOP 0512, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-0512, telephone (202) 720-7796; FAX (202) 690-3434; e-mail leonard-covelto@wdc.fsa.usda.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title:* Generic Information Collection.  
*OMB Control Number:* New submission.

*Type of Request:* Approval of a new information collection.

*Abstract:* President Clinton's Executive Order 12862, "Setting Customer Service Standards," September 11, 1993, requires agencies to annually survey customers to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing services. Executive Order 12862, and ensuing memoranda: "Improving Customer Service," March 22, 1995; and Conducting "Conversations with America" to Further Improve Customer Service, March 3, 1998, require, among other things, that agencies, on an ongoing basis, measure results achieved against published customer service standards and report the results annually. Agencies are directed to provide significant services directly to the public to make information, services, and complaint systems easily accessible,

and to provide a means to address customer complaints. The proposed information will enable USDA Service Center and their partner agencies (Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Rural Development (RD)) to comply with Executive Order 12862 and the above referenced memoranda.

The types of information collection instruments the FAC Service Center Implementation Team plans to use for the next 3 years are written surveys, focus groups, comment and complaint cards, customer call backs, benchmarking studies, telephone surveys, and structured interviews.

FAC and the USDA Service Center partner agencies will use the information collected to meet requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) and to improve USDA's Service Center operations. The proposed collections will provide current performance and trend data in support of GPRA performance requirements and USDA's National FAC's Strategic and Annual Performance Plans.

Survey data has been collected since 1994 and has been used for creating GPRA initiatives, to support the Service Center and the three partner agencies' strategic plans, and to obtain customer service baseline, as well as, to measure performance against established baselines.

Written and telephone surveys will be designed and conducted in accordance with appropriate sampling design principles. The design and implementation of the surveys will meet the requirements and guidelines of OMB as set forth in the OMB manuals, "The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995: Implementing Guidance" and "Resource Manual for Customer Surveys."

Focus groups have and will continue to be a useful and productive data collection activity. They will be used to explore what our customers view as important service attributes. Focus groups are also very useful for getting customer views of new proposed ways of doing things. In 1996, USDA employees from the three partner agencies conducted 37 focus group meetings across the country. States were selected to insure a balance of programs and farming regions. The goal was to find out what kinds of service customers want and how USDA might best deal