

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

Commodity Credit Corporation

Installation and Improvement of Grain Cleaning Equipment

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public hearing and extension of comment period.

SUMMARY: On November 29, 1999, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) published a Notice (64 FR 66606) soliciting public comment on the merits of whether the CCC should finance, in some manner, the installation or upgrading of grain cleaning systems at wheat export elevators in the United States. This Notice announces that CCC will conduct a public hearing regarding this proposal and extend the time period for public comments.

DATES: *Public Hearing:* The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), will hold a public hearing to solicit comments on a proposal to finance cleaning systems at wheat elevators in the United States. This hearing will take place on January 28, 2000, beginning at 10 a.m. in the Jefferson Auditorium, USDA South Building, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC. Handicap facilities, including sign language, will be available at the hearing. FAS will prepare a transcript of the hearing.

Those who wish to be assured the opportunity to provide a statement at the hearing must register no later than Wednesday, January 26, 2000.

Comment Date Extension: The date for receipt of written comments on the Notice published at 64 FR 66606 is extended to February 4, 2000. Comments must be received on or before that date to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Please direct written correspondence to:

Timothy J. Galvin, Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, Room 5071, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250. Telephone, fax or e-mail correspondence may be directed to: Sam Dunlap, Assistant to the Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, Phone: (202) 720-1743, Fax: (202) 690-0493, e-mail: dunlaps@fas.usda.gov.

Signed at Washington, DC on January 13, 2000.

Timothy J. Galvin,

Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

[FR Doc. 00-1490 Filed 1-20-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-10-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

National Drought Policy Commission

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Commission public hearing.

SUMMARY: The National Drought Policy Commission (Commission) shall conduct a thorough study and submit a report to the President and Congress on national drought policy. This notice announces a public hearing to be held on February 3, 2000, in Atlanta, Georgia, and seeks comments on issues that the Commission should address and recommendations that the Commission should consider as part of its report. The hearing is open to the public.

DATES: The Commission will conduct a public hearing on February 3, 2000, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) at Georgia State University Student Center, Speaker's Auditorium, 44 Courtland Street, Atlanta, Georgia.

Anyone wishing to make an oral presentation to the Commission at the public hearing, must contact the Executive Director, Leona Dittus, in writing (by letter, fax or internet) no later than COB, January 27, 2000, in order to be included on the agenda. Presenters will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis. The request should identify the name and affiliation of the individual who will make the presentation and an outline of the issues to be addressed. Thirty-five copies of any written presentation material shall

be given to the Executive Director by all presenters no later than the time of the presentation for distribution to the Commission and the interested public. Those wishing to testify, but who are unable to notify the Commission office by January 27, 2000, will be able to sign up as a presenter the day of the hearing (February 3, 2000) between 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time). These presenters will testify on a first-come, first-served basis and comments will be limited based on the time available and the number of presenters. Written statements will be accepted at the meeting, or may be mailed or faxed to the Commission office.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact Leona Dittus, on 202-720-3168, or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339, and leona.dittus@usda.gov, by COB January 27, 2000.

Comments: The public is invited to respond and/or to submit additional comments, concerns, and issues for consideration by the Commission.

ADDRESSES: Comments and statements should be sent to Leona Dittus, Executive Director, National Drought Policy Commission, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 6701-S, STOP 0501, Washington, D.C. 20250-0501.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Leona Dittus (202) 720-3168; FAX (202) 720-9688; Internet: leona.dittus@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the Commission is to provide advice and recommendations to the President and Congress on the creation of an integrated, coordinated Federal policy, designed to prepare for and respond to serious drought emergencies. Tasks for the Commission include developing recommendations that will (a) better integrate Federal laws and programs with ongoing State, local, and tribal programs, (b) improve public awareness of the need for drought mitigation, prevention, and response and (c) determine whether all Federal drought preparation and response programs should be consolidated under one existing Federal agency, and, if so, identify the agency.

Below is a draft vision statement and set of principles to guide the Commission. Draft Vision Statement: Our vision is of a well-informed,

involved U.S. citizenry and its governments prepared for and capable of lessening the impacts of drought—consistently and timely—in the new millennium.

This vision is based on the following principles:

Consideration of all affected entities and related issues, including legal, economic, geographic, climate, religious, and cultural differences; fairness and equity; and environmental concerns;

Comprehensive, long-term strategies that emphasize drought planning and measures to reduce the impacts of drought;

Federal role focused on appropriate coordination, technical assistance, education, and incentives while at all times respecting the rights and responsibilities of Federal, State, and local governments, and tribal sovereignty;

Self-reliance and self-determination;

Lessons learned from past drought experiences;

Shared drought-related expertise and knowledge across international borders.

In addition to your own views and thoughts regarding a national drought policy, as you review the draft vision and guiding principles, the Commission would be interested in your thoughts regarding the following questions:

1. What is the best means for informing the public of Federal assistance for drought planning and mitigation?
2. What type of information do you need for responding to the drought?
3. What needs do you or your organization presently have with respect to addressing drought conditions?
4. What do you see as the Federal role with respect to drought preparedness? Drought response? Should Federal emergency assistance be contingent on advance preparedness?
5. Are there any ways you feel that the Federal Government could better coordinate with State, regional, tribal, and local governments in mitigating or responding to droughts?
6. What lessons have you or your organization learned from past drought experiences that would be beneficial in the creation of a national drought policy?

Signed at Washington, D.C., on January 18, 2000.

Keith Kelly,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

[FR Doc. 00-1633 Filed 1-19-00; 2:27 pm]

BILLING CODE 3410-05-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

RIN 0584-AC89

National School Lunch Program: Pilot Projects, Alternatives to Free and Reduced Price Application Requirements and Verification Procedures

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces pilot projects which would permit selected school food authorities and State agencies to test alternatives to the application procedures and verification process for households participating in the National School Lunch Program. This notice responds to recent data comparisons which suggest that the existing application procedures and verification process do not effectively deter misreporting of eligibility information. The results of these tests will be used in considering revisions to the current application procedures and verification process to reduce the misreporting of eligibility information.

DATES: Applications to conduct a pilot project must be postmarked no later than March 21, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Matthew Sinn by telephone at (703) 305-2017 to request an application packet or in writing to: Matthew Sinn, Office of Analysis Nutrition and Evaluation, Room 503, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302; or electronically at, matthew.sinn@fns.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Is There Additional Information on the Internet?

You can get copies of the complete text of 7 CFR part 210, which covers the NSLP, and 7 CFR part 245, which includes the current application and verification requirements, from the FNS Web site at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd>. Access the National School Lunch Program, then Regulations and Policy to find a link to the federal regulations for application and verification requirements.

What are the Current Free and Reduced Price Meal Application Procedures?

Under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), each school year, school food authorities distribute free and reduced price meal applications to households of enrolled children. Households complete the information

required on the application and return it to the school food authority. School food authority officials then determine whether the household is either *categorically eligible* or *income eligible* for benefits based on the NSLP's Income Eligibility Guidelines. The information required to determine *categorical eligibility* are the name of the child, the appropriate food stamp case number, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) case number or an equivalent identifier used for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and the signature of an adult household member. The information required to determine *income eligibility* are the names of all household members including the child for whom application is made; the social security number of the adult who signs the application or an indication that the household member does not have a social security number; the current amount of income received by each household member identified by the individual who receives it; and the source of the income, such as wages, welfare, alimony, and the signature of an adult household member.

As an option to using the above application procedures to establish a child's eligibility, school food authorities have been allowed since 1991 to directly certify children for free meal benefits. School food authorities may certify children eligible for free meal benefits, without further application, by directly communicating with the appropriate State or local agency to obtain documentation that the children are members of food stamp households or members of households certified eligible for TANF or FDPIR. This certification process is referred to as "direct certification."

What are the Current Verification Process Requirements?

School food authorities must verify the eligibility information on a sample of the free and reduced price applications submitted in any given school year as required in 7 CFR 245.6a. Generally, school food authorities verify a minimum of 3% of the applications which have been approved for free and reduced price meal benefits. Alternatively, a school food authority may verify a smaller sample by focusing on households whose income is within \$100 of the annual income eligibility guidelines and selecting a portion of their applications originally approved based on categorical eligibility through participation in the Food Stamp Program, TANF or FDPIR. Households that were directly certified are not required to be verified.