

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.

JOINT BOARD FOR THE ENROLLMENT OF ACTUARIES

Meeting of the Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries

ACTION: Notice of Federal Advisory Committee meeting.

SUMMARY: The Executive Director of the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries gives notice of a closed meeting of the Advisory Committee on Actuarial Examination at William M. Mercer, Incorporated, New York, New York, on April 3, 2000.

DATES: The meeting will be held on April 3, 2000, from 8:30 AM to 5 PM.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at William M. Mercer, Incorporated, at 1166 Avenue of the Americas, Conference Room 30C, 30th Floor, New York, NY.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patrick W. McDonough, Director of Practice and Executive Director of the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries, 202-694-1805.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice is hereby given that the Advisory Committee on Actuarial Examinations will meet at William M. Mercer, Incorporated, 1166 Avenue of the Americas, Conference Room 30C, 30th Floor, New York, NY on Monday, April 3, 2000, from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss topics and questions, which may be recommended for inclusion on future Joint Board examinations in actuarial mathematics, pension law and methodology referred to in 29 U.S.C. 1242(a)(1)(B).

A determination has been made as required by section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463) that the subject of the meeting falls with the exception to the open meeting requirement set forth in Title 5, U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(B), and that the public

interest requires that such meeting be closed to public participation.

Dated: March 10, 2000.

Patrick W. McDonough,

Executive Director, Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries.

[FR Doc. 00-6578 Filed 3-16-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4830-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

[Docket No. 99-061-1]

Declaration of Emergency Because of Scrapie in the United States

Scrapie, a degenerative and eventually fatal disease affecting the central nervous systems of sheep and goats, is present in the United States. Scrapie is a complicated disease because it often has an extremely long incubation period without clinical signs of disease.

Currently, scrapie-free countries have an enormous competitive advantage over U.S. sheep producers, who are unable to certify that their flocks originated from a scrapie-free country or region. Because importing countries are demanding that imported sheep come from scrapie-free regions and sheep producers in the United States are unable to make this certification, U.S. producers are finding themselves locked out of the international market, a situation that is taking a serious financial toll on the U.S. sheep industry.

We estimate that scrapie costs the U.S. sheep industry \$20 million per year in direct losses, and millions of dollars more in lost potential markets and flock productivity.

Therefore, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has determined it is necessary to accelerate the eradication of scrapie from the United States, an accomplishment that would allow the U.S. sheep industry to once again become competitive in the global market. We estimate this plan will cost a total of \$100 million over 7 years.

However, APHIS resources are insufficient to carry out this accelerated scrapie eradication program, which requires \$10 million for FY 2000. This \$10 million includes approximately \$3.6 million for diagnostic support; approximately \$2.6 million for animal

identification and regulatory enforcement; \$1.2 million to indemnify owners of animals that are found through surveillance to be high risk, suspect, or test positive (although no regulations currently exist to provide for the payment of indemnity for sheep and goats, APHIS expects to have such regulations in effect in 2000); \$625,000 for the purchase of animals for diagnostic purposes; \$692,000 for activities such as necropsy, disposal of animal carcasses, coordination, and training; \$1 million for slaughter surveillance activities; and \$250,000 to update the generic database for scrapie (making it possible for field and laboratory personnel to enter test and other data efficiently and to generate required reports) and for data analysis at APHIS' Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health.

Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of the Act of September 25, 1981, 95 Stat. 953 (7 U.S.C. 147b), I declare that there is an emergency that threatens the sheep and goat industry of this country, and I authorize the transfer and use of such funds as may be necessary from appropriations or other funds available to the United States Department of Agriculture to conduct a program to accelerate the eradication of scrapie from the United States.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This declaration of emergency shall become effective February 1, 2000.

Dan Glickman,

Secretary of Agriculture.

[FR Doc. 00-6638 Filed 3-16-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket No. TB-00-08]

National Advisory Committee for Tobacco Inspection Services; Meeting

In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) announcement is made of the following committee meeting:

Name: National Advisory Committee for Tobacco Inspection Services.

Date: April 20, 2000.

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Place: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), 14th and Independence Avenue, SW,

Room 3501 South Agriculture Building, Washington, DC 20250.

Purpose: To review various regulations issued pursuant to the Tobacco Inspection Act (7 U.S.C. 511 *et seq.*), and discuss the level of service (number of sets of graders) AMS will provide for the 2000–2001 tobacco marketing season. The Committee will recommend the desired level of service to be provided to producers by AMS and an appropriate fee structure to fund the recommended services for the 2000–2001 selling season.

The meeting is open to the public. Persons, other than members, who wish to address the Committee at the meeting should contact John P. Duncan III, Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs, AMS, USDA, Room 502 Annex Building, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090–6456; (202) 205–0567, prior to the meeting. Written statements may be submitted to the Committee before, at, or after the meeting. If you need any accommodations to participate in the meeting, please contact the Tobacco Programs at (202) 205–0567 by April 14, 2000, and inform us of your needs.

Dated: March 14, 2000.

John P. Duncan III,

Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs.

[FR Doc. 00–6676 Filed 3–16–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Rural Utilities Service

Farm Service Agency

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCIES: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, Rural Utilities Service, and Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection: comments request.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service (RHS), the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS), Rural Utilities Service (RUS), and the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of compliance with applicable acts for planning and performing construction and other development work.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by May 16, 2000, to be assured consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Samuel J. Hodges III, Architect, Program Support Staff, RHS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 0761, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250–0761, Telephone (202) 720–9653.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: RD 1924–A, “Planning and Performing Construction and Other Development.”

OMB Number: 0575–0042

Expiration Date of Approval: May 31, 2000

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The information collection under OMB Number 0575–0042 enables the Agencies to effectively administer the policies, methods, and responsibilities in the planning and performing of construction and other development work for the related construction programs.

Section 501 of Title V of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to extend financial assistance to construct, improve, repair, replace, or rehabilitate dwellings; farm buildings; and/or related facilities to provide decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions and adequate farm buildings and other structures in rural areas.

Section 506 of the act requires that all new buildings and repairs shall be constructed in accordance with plans and specifications as required by the Secretary and that such construction be supervised and inspected.

Section 509 of the act grants the Secretary the power to determine and prescribe the standards of adequate farm housing and other buildings. The Housing and Urban-Rural Recovery Act of 1983 amended section 509 (a) and section 515 to require residential buildings and related facilities comply with the standards prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, or in any of the nationally recognized model building codes.

Similar authorizations are contained in sections 303, 304, 306, and 339 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, as amended.

In several sections of both acts, loan limitations are established as percentages of development cost, requiring careful monitoring of those costs. Also, the Secretary is authorized to prescribe regulations to ensure that Federal funds are not wasted or dissipated and that construction will be undertaken economically and will not be of elaborate or extravagant design or materials.

Other information collection is required to conform to numerous Public Laws applying to all Federal agencies, such as: Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968, Davis-Bacon Act, Historic Preservation Act, Environmental Policy Act; and to conform to Executive Orders governing use of Federal funds. This information is cleared through the appropriate enforcing Agency or other executive Department.

The Agencies provide forms and/or guidelines to assist in the collection and submission of information; however, most of the information may be collected and submitted in the form and content which is accepted and typically used in normal conduct of planning and performing development work in private industry when a private lender is financing the activity. The information is usually submitted via hand delivery or U.S. Postal Service to the appropriate Agency office.

The information is used by the Agencies to determine whether a loan/grant can be approved, to ensure that the Agency has adequate security for the loans financed, to provide for sound construction and development work, and to determine that the requirements of the applicable acts have been met. The information is also used to monitor compliance with the terms and conditions of the Agencies' loan/grant programs and to monitor the prudent use of Federal funds.

If the information were not collected and submitted, the Agencies would not have control over the type and quality of construction and development work planned and performed with Federal funds. The Agencies would not be assured that the security provided for loans is adequate, nor would the Agencies be certain that decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling or other adequate structures were being provided to rural residents as required by the different acts.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .33 hours per response.

Respondents: Individuals or households, farms, business or other for-profit, non-profit institutions, and small businesses or organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 25,340.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 12.00.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 94,924 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Diana Wareham, Regulations and Paperwork Management Division, at (202) 692–0044.