

Endangered Species Act (ESA), will be completed on all proposed activities.

Public involvement will be especially important at several points during the analysis, beginning with the scoping process. The Forest Service will be consulting with Tribes and seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, local agencies, current range permittees, and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposals. The scoping process includes:

1. Identifying and clarifying issues.
2. Identifying key issues to be analyzed in depth.
3. Exploring alternatives based on themes which will be derived from issues recognized during scoping activities.
4. Identifying potential environmental effects of the proposals and alternatives (*i.e.*, direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions).
5. Determining potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.
6. Developing a list of interested people to keep apprised of opportunities to participate through meetings, personal contacts, or written comments.
7. Developing a means of informing the public through the media and/or written material (*e.g.*, newsletters, correspondence, *etc.*).

Public comments are appreciated throughout the analysis process. The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and be available for public review by March, 2001. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**. The final EIS is scheduled to be available October, 2001.

Comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered, however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform

the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within a specified number of days.

The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice of this early stage of public participation and of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of a draft EIS must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived or dismissed by the court if not raised until after completion of the final EIS. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 f.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir, 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 45-day comment period so substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider and respond to them in the final EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement. (Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.)

In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to substantive comments and responses received during the comment period that pertain to the environmental consequences discussed in the draft EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making a decision regarding the proposal. The Forest Service is the lead Agency. Karyn L. Wood, Forest Supervisor, is the Responsible Official. As the Responsible Official she will document the decision and rationale for the decision in the

Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service Appeal Regulations (36 CFR part 215).

Dated: March 31, 2000.

Karyn L. Wood,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 00-8622 Filed 4-6-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Agricultural Statistics Service

Notice of Intent To Seek Approval To Conduct an Information Collection

AGENCY: National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. No. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget regulations at 5 CFR part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), this notice announces the intent of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to request an extension of a currently approved information collection, the *Honey Survey*.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by June 12, 2000 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Contact Rich Allen, Associate Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4117 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-2000, (202) 720-4333.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Honey Survey.

OMB Control Number: 0535-0153.

Expiration Date of Approval: October 31, 2000.

Type of Request: To extend a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The primary objective of the National Agricultural Statistics Service is to prepare and issue state and national estimates of crop and livestock production. The Honey Survey collects information on the number of colonies, honey production, stocks, and prices. The survey provides data needed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other government agencies to administer programs and to set trade quotas and tariffs. State universities and agriculture departments also use data from this survey. The Honey Survey has approval from OMB for a three year period. NASS intends to request that the survey be approved for another three years.

These data will be collected under the authority of 7 U.S.C. 2204(a). Individually identifiable data collected under this authority are governed by Section 1770 of the Food Security Act of 1985, 7 U.S.C. 2276, which requires USDA to afford strict confidentiality to non-aggregated data provided by respondents.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 minutes per response.

Respondents: Farms.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 7,200.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 2,426 hours.

Copies of this information collection and related instructions can be obtained without charge from Ginny McBride, the Agency OMB Clearance Officer, at (202) 720-5778.

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 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: Ginny McBride, Agency OMB Clearance Officer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4162 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-2000.

All responses to this notice will become a matter of public record and be summarized in the request for OMB approval.

Signed at Washington, DC, March 24, 2000.

Rich Allen,

Associate Administrator.

[FR Doc. 00-8609 Filed 4-6-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-20-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Agricultural Statistics Service

Notice of Intent To Seek Approval To Conduct an Information Collection

AGENCY: National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget regulations at 5 CFR part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), this notice announces the intent of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to request approval for an information collection, the Monthly Hog Survey.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by June 12, 2000, to be assured of consideration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS: Contact Rich Allen, Associate Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4117 South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250-2000, (202) 720-4333.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Monthly Hog Survey.

Type of Request: Intent to Seek Approval to Conduct an Information Collection.

Abstract: The National Agricultural Statistics Service is responsible for collecting and issuing state and national estimates of crop and livestock production, grain stocks, farm numbers, land values, on-farm pesticide usage, and pest crop management practices. Uses of this statistical information are extensive and varied. Producers, farm organizations, agribusinesses, state and national farm policy makers, and government agencies are important users of these statistics. Agricultural statistics are used to plan and administer other related Federal and state programs in such areas as consumer protection, conservation, foreign trade, education, and recreation.

The Monthly Hog Survey Program will supplement the Hog Survey Program currently conducted as part of the Quarterly Agricultural Surveys. The monthly surveys will use a shorter version of the quarterly questionnaire and will be conducted eight times a year, during the months between the Quarterly Hog Surveys. The sampling frame for the monthly program will be hog owners who reported breeding females on the December Quarterly Hog Survey.

NASS was directed to publish on a monthly basis the Hogs and Pigs Inventory Report with the passage by Congress and signature of the President of H.R. 1906, the FY2000 Department of Agriculture budget. The Monthly Hog Report will include estimates of (1) Inventory of breeding females, (2) breeding females mated, (3) litters farrowed, (4) pigs born alive, (5) average pigs/litter born, and (6) pigs weaned. Hog producers supported the provision that NASS publish the Hogs and Pigs Inventory Report on a monthly basis. Data users can utilize monthly data of breeding females and pig crop to get an indication of hog supplies coming to market over the next 6 months.

These data will be collected under the authority of 7 U.S.C. 2204(a).

Individually identifiable data collected under this authority are governed by Section 1770 of the Food Security Act of 1985, 7 U.S.C. 2276, which requires USDA to afford strict confidentiality to non-aggregated data provided by respondents.

Estimate of Burden: Experience with similar surveys indicates that the questionnaire will require approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Respondents: Farms.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 2,805.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 3,740 hours.

Copies of this information collection and related instructions can be obtained without charge from Ginny McBride, Agency OMB Clearance Officer, at (202) 720-5778.

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 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: Ginny McBride, Agency OMB Clearance Officer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4162 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-2000. All responses to this notice will become a matter of public record and be included in the request for OMB approval.