

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: May 1, 2000.

Robert C. Keeney,

Deputy Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs.

[FR Doc. 00-11417 Filed 5-5-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request—Food Stamp Program Identification Card Requirements

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on proposed information collections. This notice announces the intent of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to continue requiring State agencies to issue a Food Stamp Program (FSP) identification (ID) card to each certified household in the Food Stamp Program.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before July 7, 2000, to be assured consideration.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Barbara Hallman, Chief, State Administration Branch, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia, 22302.

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.

All comments will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval of the

information collection. All comments will become a matter of public record.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel Wilusz, (703) 305-2391.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Food Stamp Program Identification Card Requirements.

OMB Number: 0584-0124.

Form Number: None.

Expiration Date: October 31, 2000.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved collection with a reduction in burden hours.

Abstract: FSP ID cards are used during recertification and for the issuance of benefits. Specifically, the ID cards will be used by:

- Issuance agents to identify households for monthly issuance;
- Retailers to identify household when benefits are used; and
- Households to provide as proof of eligibility and when being issued monthly allotments.

The issuance of FSP ID cards by State agencies is authorized by section 7 of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (the Act) (7 U.S.C. 2016). Section 11 of the Act (7 U.S.C. 2020) further specifies that these are to be photographic (photo) ID cards in both large project areas and in those areas identified by the Department as needing photo ID cards to reduce the number of unauthorized issuances.

FSP regulations at 7 CFR 274.10(a) require that State agencies issue a FSP ID card to each household certified to participate in the FSP. The household must present its ID card as proof of eligibility to receive and use benefits. In addition, 7 CFR 274.10(b) requires State agencies to issue photo ID cards in project areas or portions thereof with more than 100,000 participants, and in smaller areas that have been identified by the Department's Inspector General as needing photo IDs to decrease the number of unauthorized issuances. Project areas where all issuance of benefits are through either direct mail or an electronic benefit transfer system (EBT) are exempt from the photo ID requirement.

FSP regulations require that the photo ID card be a controlled document with a serial number protected by lamination. The fact that it is a controlled document with a serial number ensures integrity in the issuance of new cards. Because the issuance agent is required by 7 CFR 274.10(c)(2)(i) to annotate this serial number on the authorization or issuance document, the State agency can identify the household that received a particular issuance during the reconciliation process. In addition, the photograph is required because it clearly identifies the bearer of the card to the issuance agent

or retailer. Lastly, the lamination of the photo ID makes it more difficult to forge or alter the card. The Department believes that all of these features are essential to ensure the integrity of the FSP ID process and the FSP in general.

Estimated Burden

We are reducing the estimated burden from 61,480 hours to 20,629 hours to reflect declining FSP participation as well as the growing number of States currently using EBT to issue benefits. Total issuance has decreased over 19 percent from fiscal year 1997 to fiscal year 1999. As a result, fewer ID cards (both regular and photo) need to be issued. In addition, the growth of EBT also lowers the burden by reducing the number of photo ID cards. Photo ID cards are not required in an EBT environment since there are no coupons for households to pick up from issuance agents. EBT has increased from 15 percent of total issuance in fiscal year 1996 to about 71 percent of total issuance in January 2000.

Affected Public: State and local government, and food stamp households.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 338,535.

Number of Responses per Respondent: 12.

Total Number of Annual Responses: 4,062,420.

Estimated Time per Response: 0.005 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: 20,629 hours.

Dated: April 28, 2000.

Samuel Chambers, Jr.,

Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.

[FR Doc. 00-11416 Filed 5-5-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-30-U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 00-016N]

Notice of Public Meeting: Revised Action Plan for the Control of *Listeria monocytogenes* for the Prevention of the Foodborne Illness Listeriosis

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting; request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will hold a public meeting to discuss and receive public comment regarding *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*). The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the initiatives the Agency took after its February 1999

public meeting on *Lm* and the Agency's future plans to further protect the public from foodborne illnesses associated with *Lm*. The Agency also invites data and public comment on *Lm*.

DATE: The meeting will be held May 15, 2000, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Written comments must be received by June 7, 2000.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn—Washington, DC on the Hill, 415 New Jersey Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20001, telephone number is 202-638-1616.

To register for the meeting and to schedule a presentation, contact Mary Harris, FSIS, by telephone (202) 501-7136 or FAX (202) 501-7642. If a sign language interpreter or other special accommodation is necessary, contact Ms. Harris at the above number.

Submit one original and two copies of written comments to: FSIS Docket Clerk, Docket #00-016N, Room 102 Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3700. All comments received in response to this notice will be considered part of the public record and will be available for viewing in the FSIS Docket Room between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Judith Riggins, Associate Deputy Administrator, Office of Policy, Program Development and Evaluation, by telephone (202) 720-2709 or Fax (202) 720-2025.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: *Listeria monocytogenes (Lm)* is found in soil and water and can contaminate a variety of raw foods, such as uncooked meats and vegetables, as well as foods that become contaminated after processing, such as soft cheeses, and cold cuts.

Consumption of food contaminated with *Lm* can cause listeriosis, an uncommon but potentially fatal disease, that can lead to serious and sometimes fatal infections in pregnant women, newborns, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems, such as those with a chronic disease, an HIV infection, or who are undergoing chemotherapy treatment.

FSIS considers *Lm* to be an adulterant in ready-to-eat (RTE) meat and poultry products. FSIS has established and enforces a zero tolerance (no detectable level permitted) for this pathogen in RTE products. Since 1989, FSIS has conducted a monitoring program within plants to test for *Lm* in certain ready-to-eat (RTE) products such as hot dogs and luncheon meats. FSIS analyzes approximately 3,500 samples for *Lm* each year. The following product categories are included in the

monitoring program: (1) Beef jerkey, (2) roast beef, cooked beef, and cooked corned beef, (3) sliced ham and luncheon meat, (4) small-diameter sausage, (5) large-diameter sausage, (6) cooked, uncured poultry, (7) salads and spreads, and (8) dry and semi-dry fermented sausage.

Out of 3,547 samples of RTE meat and poultry products analyzed in calendar year 1998 through the monitoring program, 90 samples, or approximately 2.5 percent, tested positive for *Lm*. FSIS sampling of just hot dogs from 1993 to 1996 showed that approximately 4.4 percent of the samples were positive for *Lm*. FSIS' monitoring program, implemented before pathogen reduction and HACCP implementation, was intended to encourage industry process control and validation. However, this program was not statistically designed and thus information obtained from it cannot be used to make determinations about *Listeria* contamination on a nationwide basis.

To gather information on *Lm* and listeriosis associated with RTE meat and poultry products, FSIS held a public meeting on February 10, 1999 (64 FR 5629). The Agency held this meeting in response to a large outbreak of listeriosis that occurred in late 1998/early 1999 that was attributed to bacteria in a RTE meat or poultry product and several recalls of *Lm* adulterated meat and poultry products. At this meeting, experts from FSIS, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), as well as industry groups and consumer groups shared foodborne illness and product contamination statistics on *Lm*, as well as information about on-going research projects and future research needs for *Lm*, testing programs for *Lm*, and educational efforts about *Lm*. At the meeting, FSIS also discussed its zero tolerance policy regarding *Lm* in RTE meat and poultry products.

In May of 1999, FSIS Administrator Tom Billy announced an action plan comprised of a number of initiatives that FSIS was undertaking to reduce the risk of foodborne illness attributed to *Lm*. The action plan for the control of *Lm* was based on the information obtained at the February 1999 public meeting as well as other information obtained by FSIS. The initiatives set forth in the action plan included near-term and long-term activities that involved all programs of the Agency, as well as interagency activities. Some of these activities included issuing a **Federal Register** notice (64 FR 28351) advising manufacturers of RTE meat and poultry products of the need to reassess their HACCP plans to ensure that the

plans were adequately addressing *Lm*, developing consumer education material targeted to reach individuals at an increased risk for developing listeriosis, developing guidance material for the regulated industry on practices that have been used successfully by meat and poultry establishments to prevent the occurrence of *Lm* in RTE products, conducting a study on the post production growth of *Lm*, and working with FDA to conduct a risk assessment for *Lm*.

FSIS has now revised its action plan for the control of *Lm* based on its analysis of the comments and data received in response to the February 1999 public meeting, recommendations of the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection and the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods, a petition received in January 2000 from the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), and the work of an interdisciplinary Agency working group.

To update the public on the initiatives undertaken and to provide the public with FSIS' revised action plan for the control of *Lm*, FSIS will hold a public meeting on May 15, 2000. FSIS requests additional data on *Lm* and public comment on the revised action plan. Some of the topics to be discussed at the May 15 meeting are:

- The public health impact of foodborne *Lm* contamination;
- The results of FSIS's review of what establishments did in response to its May 1999 **Federal Register** notice on reassessment of HACCP plans to ensure that they adequately address *Lm*;
- The revised instructions to be issued to field employees regarding the testing and sampling of RTE products;
- The petition received by FSIS from CSPI, (copies are available in the FSIS Docket Clerk's office, See **ADDRESSES**);
- Consumer education about *Lm*; and
- Research on *Lm*.

The agenda for the public meeting will be available on the FSIS homepage, www.usda.fsis.gov and at the meeting.

Representatives from government, industry groups, consumer groups, and academia will lead the discussions. There will be time at the end of the meeting for general public comment. However, attendees must sign-up in advance to speak during the public comment session. The sign-up sheet will be at the meeting. Time allotted for comment will be approximately 5 minutes for each participant, but will depend on the number of people participating.

Additional Public Notification

Public awareness of all segments of rulemaking and policy development is important. Consequently, in an effort to better ensure that minorities, women, and persons with disabilities are aware of this notice, FSIS will announce it and provide copies of this **Federal Register** publication in the FSIS Constituent Update. FSIS provides a weekly FSIS Constituent Update, which is communicated via fax to over 300 organizations and individuals. In addition, the update is available on-line through the FSIS web page located at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>. The update is used to provide information regarding FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, **Federal Register** notices, FSIS public meetings, recalls, and any other types of information that could affect or would be of interest to our constituents/stakeholders. The constituent fax list consists of industry, trade, and farm groups, consumer interest groups, allied health professionals, scientific professionals, and other individuals that have requested to be included. Through these various channels, FSIS is able to provide information to a much broader, more diverse audience. For more information and to be added to the constituent fax list, fax your request to the Congressional and Public Affairs Office, at (202) 720-5704.

Done at Washington, DC, on: May 3, 2000.

Thomas J. Billy,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 00-11419 Filed 5-5-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-DM-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Forest Service**

Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the White Mountain National Forest; Carroll, Coos, and Grafton Counties, New Hampshire and Oxford County, Maine

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of extension of public comment period on notice of intent for fourteen days.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service published a White Mountain National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan in the **Federal Register** on March 9, 2000 (Vol. 65, No. 47, FR 12505, Mar. 9, 2000). The Forest Service is extending the public comment period on that notice of Intent. A 14 day extension of the public comment period was given in response to comments from the public requesting additional time to fully analyze the issues and prepare comprehensive

comments. The fourteen (14) day extensions starts immediately after the initial public comment period that ends May 9, 2000. The fourteen (14) day extension of the public comment period starts May 10, 2000 and ends May 23, 2000.

Additional information on the Notice of Intent can be found in the notice published in the **Federal Register** referenced above.

DATES: Comments on the Notice of Intent should be received in writing by May 23, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to: Forest Planning, White Mountain National Forest, 719 N. Main St., Laconia, NH 03246. Or direct electronic mail to: mwoodbury@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bryan Armel, Forest Planner, at (603) 528-8788. TDD (603) 528-8722. E-mail address: barmel@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The responsible official is Robert T. Jacobs, Regional Forester, Eastern Region, 210 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203.

Dated: May 2, 2000.

Donna L. Hepp,

Forest Supervisor, White Mountain National Forest.

[FR Doc. 00-11381 Filed 5-5-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Rural Housing Service****Housing Demonstration Program**

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ACTION: Notice of Funding for the Rural Housing Demonstration Program.

SUMMARY: The Rural Housing Service (RHS) announces the availability of housing funds for Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 for the Rural Housing Demonstration Program. For FY 2000, RHS has set aside \$3 million for the Innovative Demonstration Initiatives and is soliciting proposals for a Housing Demonstration program under section 506(b) of title V of the Housing Act of 1949. Under section 506(b), RHS may provide loans for innovative housing units and systems which do not meet existing published standards, rules, regulations, or policies. The intended effect is to increase the availability of affordable Rural Housing (RH) for low-income families through innovative designs and systems.

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 5, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Gloria L. Denson, Senior Loan Specialist, Single Family Housing Direct Loan Division, RHS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 0783, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-0783, Telephone (202) 720-1474. (This is not a toll free number.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under current standards, regulations, and policies, some low-income rural families lack sufficient income to qualify for loans to obtain adequate housing. Section 506(b) of title V of the Housing Act of 1949, authorizes a housing demonstration program that could result in housing that these families can afford. The Congress of the United States made two conditions: (1) That the health and safety of the population of the areas in which the demonstrations are carried out will not be adversely affected, and (2) that the aggregate expenditures for the demonstration may not exceed \$10 million in any Fiscal Year.

Rural Development State Directors are authorized in FY 2000 to accept proposed demonstration concept proposals from nonprofit and for profit organizations.

The objective of the demonstration programs is to test new approaches to offering housing under the statutory authority granted to the Secretary of Agriculture. Rural Development will be required to review each application for completeness and accuracy; however, some demonstration programs may or may not be consistent with some of the provisions of our 7 CFR part 3550-Direct Single Family Housing Loans and Grants regulation. Under section 506(b) of the Housing Act of 1949, the Agency may provide loans for innovative housing design units, and systems which do not meet existing published standards, rules, regulations, or policies.

An application will be considered on a first come, first served basis based on the date a completed application is submitted. An application is considered complete only if the "Application for Approval of Housing Innovation" is complete in content, contains information related to the evaluation criteria and all applicable additional information required by this form has been provided. All application packages must be in accordance with the technical management requirements and address the evaluation criteria in the Proposal Content and Evaluation Criteria. The application, Proposal Content and Evaluation Criteria, and further information may be obtained from the Rural Development State Office in your area. (See the State Office