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

Office of the Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics; Notice of the Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21st Century Agriculture Meeting

AGENCY: Agricultural Research Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meetings.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. 2, the United States Department of Agriculture announces two meetings of the Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21st Century Agriculture (AC21).

DATES: The meeting dates are November 14, 2011, from 11 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. and November 15, 2011, from 10:30 a.m. until 12 noon.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be conducted in Webinar format entirely by telephone and Internet.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael Schechtman, Designated Federal Official, Office of the Deputy Secretary, USDA, 202 B Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, 12th and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250; Telephone (202) 720–3817; Fax (202) 690–4265; Email AC21@ars.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The AC21 provides information and advice to the Secretary of Agriculture on topics related to the use of biotechnology in agriculture. Background information regarding the work and membership of the AC21 is available on the USDA Web site at http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=AC21Main.xml&contentidonly=true.

The immediate work of the AC21 is to address the following two questions: (1) What types of compensation mechanisms, if any, would be appropriate to address economic losses by farmers in which the value of their crops is reduced by the unintended presence of GE material[s]? and (2) What would be necessary to implement such mechanisms? That is, what would be the eligibility standard for a loss and what tools and triggers (e.g., tolerances, testing protocols, etc.) would be needed to verify and measure such losses and determine if claims are compensable?

The purpose of the two meetings is to provide background information in a Webinar format to AC21 members on existing USDA programs that may serve as examples to help in the development of potential compensation mechanisms for the committee to consider, should it deem compensation mechanisms appropriate to recommend. During the November 14, 2011, conference call, AC21 members will be briefed on, and have the opportunity to discuss, background information on USDA’s crop insurance programs under the Risk Management Agency. During the November 15, 2011, conference call members will be briefed on, and have the opportunity to discuss, background information on the indemnification programs for perishable agricultural commodities under the Agricultural Marketing Service and for diseased livestock under the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Members of the public who wish to listen in to the November 14, 2011, meeting may view the presentations and listen to audio at https://cc.readytalk.com/r/jq96hzo0psp4 or dial in at Area Code (800) 705–8289. Members of the public who wish to listen in to the November 15, 2011, meeting may view the presentations and listen to audio at https://cc.readytalk.com/r/jq96hzop0sp4 or dial in at Area Code (800) 698–5986. There will be an opportunity for the public to comment on this background material at the next in-person meeting of the AC21, which will be scheduled later. This notice of meeting agendas is given pursuant to section 10 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. 2 10).

Dated: October 26, 2011.

Yeshimebet Abebe, 
Chief of Staff.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

RIN 0524–AA43

Solicitation of Input From Stakeholders Regarding the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)

AGENCY: National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of request for stakeholder input.

SUMMARY: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is soliciting stakeholder input on the administration of the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) authorized under section 1415A of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3151a). The purpose of this program is for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to enter into agreements with veterinarians under which the veterinarians agree to provide, for a specific period of time as identified in the agreement, veterinary services in veterinarian shortage situations. As part of the stakeholder input process, NIFA is inviting comments regarding the current procedures and processes in place for the VMLRP. Input collected will be used to modify and improve processes for subsequent calls of shortage situation nominations and request for applications.

DATES: Written comments are invited from interested individuals and organizations. All comments must be received by close of business on December 5, 2011, to be considered.


Mail: Paper, disk or CD–ROM submissions should be submitted to VMLRP, Policy and Oversight Division, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2299, 1400

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The VMLRP helps qualified veterinarians offset a significant portion of the debt incurred in pursuit of their veterinary medicine degrees in return for their service in certain high-priority veterinary shortage situations. NIFA will enter into educational loan repayment agreements with veterinarians who agree to provide veterinary services in veterinarian shortage situations for a determined period of time. NIFA may repay up to $25,000 of a veterinarian’s student loan debt per year if the veterinarian commits to at least three years to provide veterinary services in a designated veterinary shortage area. Loan repayment benefits are limited to payments of the principal and interest on government and commercial loans received for the attendance at an accredited college of veterinary medicine that resulted in a degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine or the equivalent.

In December 2003, the National Veterinary Medical Service Act (NVMSA) was passed into law adding section 1415A to the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA). This law established a new Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (7 U.S.C. 3151a) authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture (secretary) to carry out a program of entering into agreements with veterinarians under which they agree to provide veterinary services in veterinarian shortage situations. In November 2005, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006 (Pub. L. 109–97), appropriated $495,000 to implement the VMLRP and represented the first time funds had been appropriated for this program. In February 2007, the Revised Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2007 (Pub. L. 110–5), appropriated an additional $495,000 for support of the program, and in December 2007, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 (Pub. L. 110–161), appropriated an additional $868,875 for support of this program, and in March 2009, the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (Pub. L. 111–8) was enacted, providing an additional $2,950,000, for the VMLRP. In October 2009, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2010 (Pub. L. 111–80) appropriated another $4,800,000 for the VMLRP. On April 15, 2011, the President signed into law, Pub. L. 112–10, Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011, which after a .2% rescission, appropriated an additional $4,790,400 for the VMLRP.

On October 1, 2009, CSREES became the NIFA as mandated by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, section 7511(f). Accordingly, the authority to administer the VMLRP transferred from CSREES to NIFA. In FY 2010, VMLRP announced its first funding opportunity and received 260 applications from which NIFA issued 53 VMLRP awards totaling $5,186,000. In FY 2011, VMLRP opened its second funding opportunity and received 159 applications from which NIFA has made 80 VMLRP award offers totaling $7,708,000. Each award offer is contingent upon submission of a signed contract, thereby executing the service agreement between the veterinarian and NIFA. Funding for future years is based on annual appropriations and balances, if any, remaining from prior years.

Section 7105 of the FCEA amended section 1415A to revise the determination of veterinarian shortage situations to consider (1) Geographical areas that the Secretary determines have a shortage of veterinarians; and (2) areas of veterinary practice that the Secretary determines have a shortage of veterinarians, such as food animal medicine, public health, epidemiology, and food safety. This section also added that priority should be given to agreements with veterinarians for the practice of food animal medicine in veterinarian shortage situations. NARETPA section 1415A requires the Secretary to determine the amount of repayment for a year of service by a veterinarian, to consider the ability of USDA to maximize the number of agreements from the amounts appropriated and to provide an incentive to serve in veterinary service shortage areas with the greatest need. This section also provides that loan repayments may consist of payments of the principal and interest on government and commercial loans received by the individual for the attendance of the individual at an accredited college of veterinary medicine resulting in a degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine or the equivalent. This program is not authorized to provide repayments for any government or commercial loans incurred during the pursuit of another degree, such as an associate or bachelor degree. Loans eligible for repayment include educational loans made for one or more of the following: Loans for tuition expenses; other reasonable educational expenses, including fees, books, and laboratory expenses, incurred by the individual; and reasonable living expenses as determined by the Secretary. In addition, the Secretary is directed to make such additional payments to participants as the Secretary determines appropriate for the purpose of providing reimbursements to participants for individual tax liability resulting from participation in this program. The Secretary delegated the authority to carry out this program to NIFA.

NIFA is inviting stakeholder comments to use in improving the administration of the VMLRP. Written comments and suggestions on issues may be submitted to the NIFA Docket Clerk at the address above.

Done in Washington, DC, this 27th day of October 2011.

Chavonda Jacobs-Young,
Acting Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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BILLING CODE 3410–22–P

ARCHITECTURAL AND TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS COMPLIANCE BOARD

Meetings

AGENCY: Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

ACTION: Notice of meetings.

SUMMARY: The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board [Access Board] plans to hold its regular Board meeting in Washington, DC, Wednesday, November 9, 2011, from 1:30–3 p.m.