DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Agricultural Statistics Service

Notice of Opportunity To Submit Comment on the Public Release Time of Several Major USDA Statistical Reports

AGENCY: National Agricultural Statistics Service and Office of the Chief Economist, Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice and request for stakeholder input.

SUMMARY: The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the Office of the Chief Economist are currently accepting stakeholder input on the public release time and procedures of several major USDA statistical reports.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by July 9, 2012 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Requests must address items listed in comments section below. Please submit comments via the Internet at https://www.agcounts.usda.gov/optin/136771, or via mail to: USDA–NASS, Agricultural Statistics Board Chair, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Room 5029, Washington, DC 20250.

If you have any questions, send an email to HQASBDeputy@nass.usda.gov or call 1–800–727–9540.


SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service and the Office of the Chief Economist are seeking comments on the release time of several of their major statistical reports. USDA statistical report release times are affected for the following reports: “World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates”, “Acreage”, “Cattle”, “Cattle on Feed”, “Crop Production”, “Grain Stocks”, “Prospective Plantings”, “Quarterly Hogs and Pigs”, and “Small Grain Summary”. The current release times of 8:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. ET will remain unchanged until official comments are considered. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Statistical Policy Directives 3 and 4,
rules are in place to regulate the public’s access to federally generated statistics. With nearly round-the-clock commodities trading in the United States now underway, the agencies want to hear from all parties who use federal agricultural statistics so that we best meet their needs while upholding our responsibility to provide equal access to data. The agencies will carefully consider all input on the time of report releases. The 2012 official published schedule for all NASS reports is available online at www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/index.asp. The World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB) report schedule is available at www.usda.gov/oce/commodity/wasde.

Comments: Please address the following questions when submitting your comments:

1. What is your preferred time of day (EDT) for report release?
2. Why is this time preferred?
3. Who are the data users impacted by this recommended time change?
4. How will this change impact these data users?
5. How are the data used when received at the current release time?
6. Other comments.

All responses to this notice will become a matter of public record and be summarized and considered by NASS and the Office of the Chief Economist in preparing any recommendation(s).


Joseph T. Reilly,
Associate Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

Agency: U.S. Census Bureau.

Title: Quarterly Services Survey.

OMB Control Number: 0607–0907.


Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Burden Hours: 20,900.

Number of Respondents: 23,500.

Average Hours per Response: 13 minutes.

Needs and Uses: The U.S. Census Bureau requests a revision of the current OMB approval of the Quarterly Services Survey (QSS). Beginning in March 2013, with the introduction of a new sample, the QSS will cover all or parts of the following NAICS sectors: Utilities (excluding government owned); Transportation and warehousing (except rail transportation and postal) services; Information; Finance and insurance (except funds, trusts, and other financial vehicles); Real estate and rental and leasing; Professional, scientific, and technical services; Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services; Educational services (except elementary and secondary schools, junior colleges, and colleges, universities, and professional schools); Health care and social assistance; Arts, entertainment, and recreation; Accommodation; and Other services (except public administration).

The QSS provides the most current reliable measures of total revenue and percentage of revenue by class of customer for select service providers. All respondent data are received by mail, facsimile, telephone, or Internet reporting.

Before the QSS economic indicator existed for the service sector, which accounts for about 53 percent of all economic activity, the only data available were from the Service Annual Survey (SAS) and the five-year Economic Censuses. The QSS was developed to address and provide more up-to-date estimates of services output. Based on this effort, the QSS is a major source for the development of quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and an indicator of short-term economic change.

The total revenue estimates produced from the QSS provide current trends of economic service industry activity in the United States from service providers with paid employees.

In addition, revenue, we also collect total expenses from tax-exempt firms in industries that have a large not-for-profit component. Expenses provide a better measure of the economic activity of these firms. Expense estimates produced by the QSS: in addition to inpatient days and discharges for the hospital industry, are used by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to project and study hospital regulation, Medicare payment adequacy, and other related projects. For select industries in the Arts, entertainment, and recreation sector, the survey produces estimates of admissions revenue.

Beginning in March 2013, with the introduction of a new QSS sample, the QSS plans to provide estimates of revenue for the Accommodation subsector and estimates for interest income, loan fees, fees and commissions, financial planning and investment management, and net gains and losses from brokering for select finance and insurance industries.

We currently publish estimates based on the 2002 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). With the introduction of the new QSS sample, we will publish estimates based on the 2007 NAICS. We will continue to publish no later than 75 days after the end of each calendar quarter.

Reliable measures of economic activity are essential as an objective assessment of the need for, and impact of, a wide range of public policy decisions. The QSS supports these measures by providing the latest estimates of service industry output on a quarterly basis.

Currently, the U.S. Census Bureau collects, tabulates, and publishes estimates to provide, with measurable reliability, statistics on domestic service total revenue, total expenses, and percentage of revenue by class of customer for select service providers. In addition, the QSS produces estimates for inpatient days and discharges for hospitals. In the future, QSS may produce breakdowns of revenue from financial firms. This depends on the quality and amount of data received as well as its reliability and accuracy.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) is the primary Federal user of QSS results. The BEA utilizes the QSS estimates to make improvements to the national accounts for service industries. In the National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA), the QSS estimates allow more accurate estimates of both Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) and private fixed investment. For example, recently published revisions to the quarterly NIPA estimates resulted from the incorporation of new source data from the QSS. Revenue estimates from the QSS are also used to produce estimates of gross output by industry that allow BEA to produce a much earlier release of the gross domestic product by industry estimates.

Estimates produced from the QSS are used by the BEA as a component of quarterly GDP estimates. The estimates also provide the Federal Reserve Board