

questionnaires to the respondents at least twice and may use autodial or a postcard reminder, before attempting phone or personal interviews to collect the data.

Respondents: Version 1—farm operators; Version 2 landlords who rent out farm land but do not operate farms.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 45,000 farm or ranch operators and 45,000 landlords who do not operate farms or ranches.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 132,000 hours. In order to minimize data collection costs, NASS will attempt to collect data by utilizing an internet version of the questionnaire as well as the U.S. Postal Service. NASS will then attempt to collect the data from non-respondents by either phone or personal enumeration. With the initial mailing, respondents will be provided with instructions on how to access the internet and complete the questionnaire on line.

The primary objectives of the National Agricultural Statistics Service are to prepare and issue State and national estimates of crop production, livestock production, economic statistics, and environmental statistics related to agriculture and to conduct the Census of Agriculture and its follow on surveys, which includes the TOTAL surveys.

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, through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, technological or other forms of information technology collection methods.

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, April 10, 2014.

Joseph T. Reilly,
Associate Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Notice of Request for Applications for the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program

AGENCY: National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is announcing the release of the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) Request for Applications (RFA) at www.nifa.usda.gov/vmlrp.

DATES: The fiscal year (FY) 2014 Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) application package will be available at www.nifa.usda.gov/vmlrp on Monday, April 21, 2014 and applications are due by Friday, June 6, 2014.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gary Sherman; National Program Leader, Veterinary Science; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2240, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250-2240; Voice: 202-401-4952; Fax: 202-401-6156; Email: gsherman@nifa.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background and Purpose

In January 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 1997 (NARETPA). This law established a new Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (7 U.S.C. 3151a) authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out a program of entering into agreements with veterinarians under which they agree to provide veterinary services in veterinarian shortage situations.

On January 17, 2014, the President signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Pub. L. 113-76), which appropriated \$4,790,000 for the VMLRP.

Section 7105 of 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, when determining 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. Finally, this section requires USDA to promulgate regulations within 270 days of the enactment of FCEA (*i.e.*, June 18, 2008). The Secretary delegated the authority to carry out this program to NIFA.

The final rule was published in the **Federal Register** on April 19, 2010 (75 FR 20239-20248). Based on comments received during the 60-day comment period upon publication of the interim rule on July 9, 2009 (74 FR 32788-32798), NIFA reconsidered the policy regarding individuals who consolidated their veterinary school loans with other educational loans (e.g. undergraduate) and their eligibility to apply for the VMLRP. NIFA will allow these individuals to apply for and receive a VMLRP award; however, only the eligible portion of the consolidation will be repaid by the VMLRP. Furthermore, applicants with consolidated loans will be asked to provide a complete history of their student loans from the National Student Loan Database System (NSLDS), a central database for student aid

operated by the U.S. Department of Education. The NSLDS Web site can be found at www.nsls.ed.gov. Individuals who consolidated their DVM loans with non-educational loans or loans belonging to an individual other than the applicant, such as a spouse or child, will continue to be ineligible for the VMLRP.

In FY 2010, NIFA announced its first funding opportunity for the VMLRP and in the four program cycles since, NIFA has received 695 applications from which 240 VMLRP awards totaling \$20,723,720 were issued. Consequently, up to \$4,500,000 is available to support this program in FY 2014. Funding for future years will be based on annual appropriations and balances, if any, remaining from prior years. The eligibility criteria for applicants and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a VMLRP award can be viewed and downloaded from the VMLRP Web site at <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/vmlrp>.

Done in Washington, DC, this 10th day of April, 2014.

Sonny Ramaswamy,

Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

[Docket No. NRCS-2014-0002]

Notice of Proposed Changes to the National Handbook of Conservation Practices for the Natural Resources Conservation Service

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability of proposed changes in the NRCS National Handbook of Conservation Practices for public review and comment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the intention of NRCS to issue a series of revised conservation practice standards in the National Handbook of Conservation Practices. These standards include: Access Road (Code 560), Agrichemical Handling Facility (Code 309), Grade Stabilization Structure (Code 410), Precision Land Forming (Code 462), Short Term Storage of Animal Waste and Byproducts (Code 318), Terraces (Code 600), Trails and Walkways (Code 575), Watering Facility (Code 614) and Water Well (Code 642).

NRCS State Conservationists who choose to adopt these practices for use

within their States will incorporate them into section IV of their respective electronic Field Office Technical Guide. These practices may be used in conservation systems that treat highly erodible land (HEL) or on land determined to be a wetland. Section 343 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 requires NRCS to make available for public review and comment all proposed revisions to conservation practice standards used to carry out HEL and wetland provisions of the law.

DATES: *Effective Date:* This is effective April 21, 2014.

Comment Date: Submit comments on or before May 21, 2014. Final versions of these new or revised conservation practice standards will be adopted after the close of the 30-day period and after consideration of all comments.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be submitted, identified by Docket Number NRCS-2014-0002, using any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- Mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attention: Regulatory and Agency Policy Team, Strategic Planning and Accountability, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Building 1-1112D, Beltsville, Maryland 20705.

NRCS will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. In general, personal information provided with comments will be posted. If your comment includes your address, phone number, email, or other personal identifying information, your comments, including personal information, may be available to the public. You may ask in your comment that your personal identifying information be withheld from public view, but this cannot be guaranteed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wayne Bogovich, National Agricultural Engineer, Conservation Engineering Division, Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Room 6136 South Building, Washington, DC 20250.

Electronic copies of the proposed revised standards are available through <http://www.regulations.gov> by accessing Docket No. NRCS-2014-0002.

Alternatively, copies can be downloaded or printed from the following Web site: <http://go.usa.gov/TXye>. Requests for paper versions or inquiries may be directed to Emil Horvath, National Practice Standards Review Coordinator, Natural Resources

Conservation Service, Central National Technology Support Center, 501 West Felix Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76115.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The amount of the proposed changes varies considerably for each of the conservation practice standards addressed in this notice. To fully understand the proposed changes, individuals are encouraged to compare these changes with each standard's current version as shown at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/technical/cp/ncps/?cid=nrcs143026849>. To aid in this comparison, following are highlights of some of the proposed revisions to each standard:

Access Road (Code 560)—The agency revised the definition. The chart for the location of cross slope drainage features was modified to include a variety of soils rather than a single soil.

Agrichemical Handling Facility (Code 309)—The agency added new criteria under which lowering the water table would be allowable, expanded sizing criteria of the agrichemical handling pad, clarified language under the storage capacity criteria, added new criteria for an equipment wash bay, and updated and added clarification to the criteria for concrete exposed to agrichemicals.

Grade Stabilization Structure (Code 410)—The agency refined the definition, modified criteria, and updated terminology related to hazard classification.

Precision Land Forming (Code 462)—The agency updated the operation and maintenance section and references.

Short Term Storage of Animal Waste and Byproducts (Code 318)—The agency created this new conservation practice standard.

Terraces (Code 600)—The agency clearly defined pressure flow and gravity flow, added tractive stress references, updated the operation and maintenance section, and added references.

Trails and Walkways (Code 575)—The agency incorporated *Trails and Walkways (Code 568)* into *Animal Trails and Walkways (Code 575)* under the name *Trails and Walkways (Code 575)*. These standards were combined into one because many of the criteria are very similar. The practice name, definition, purpose, and conditions where practice applies were modified accordingly.

Watering Facility (Code 614)—The agency revised the definition of this practice and a purpose was added. The criteria for watering ramps were added. There is more emphasis on water storage tanks.