

2019 RATES—Continued

	Regular	Overtime	Holiday	Includes travel costs in rate	Start date
Import Inspection and Certification (grading of imported tobacco for manufacturers and dealers).	\$0.0170/kg or \$0.0080/pound			X	July 1, 2019.

¹ Rulemaking is in progress to change Commitment and Non-commitment to Scheduled and Unscheduled, respectively.

² Rulemaking is in progress to change Resident and Fee Service to Scheduled and Unscheduled, respectively.

³ Administrative changes are applied in addition to hourly rates for resident service as specified in Part 56, Subpart A, § 56.52(a)(4); Part 56, Subpart SA, § 56.54(a)(2); Part 70, Subpart A, § 70.76(a)(2); Part 70, Subpart A, § 70.77(a)(4) and Part 70.

⁴ Travel costs outside the United States will be added to the fee, if applicable.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 15b; 7 U.S.C. 473a–b; 7 U.S.C. 55 and 61; 7 U.S.C. 51–65; 7 U.S.C. 471–476; 7 U.S.C. 511, 511s; and 7 U.S.C. 1621–1627.

Dated: April 25, 2019.

Bruce Summers,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 2019–08701 Filed 4–29–19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Research Service

Notice of Intent To Seek OMB Approval To Collect Information: Forms Pertaining to the Scientific Peer Review of ARS Research Projects

AGENCY: Agricultural Research Service (ARS), USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The proposed information collection requirement described below will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and OMB implementing regulations. The Department is soliciting public comments on the subject proposal.

DATES: Written comments on this notice should be submitted on or before July 1, 2019.

ADDRESSES: All comments concerning this notice should be directed to the Director and Program Coordinator listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Marquee D. King, Director and Program Coordinator, Office of Scientific Quality Review (OSQR), Agricultural Research Service, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Beltsville, Maryland 20705; Telephone: 301–504–3283; Fax: 301–504–1251; email: marquee.king@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The OSQR will seek approval from OMB to update six existing forms to ensure that ARS can efficiently manage data associated

with the peer review of agricultural research. All forms are transferred and received electronically and may include on-line submissions in the future.

Abstract: The OSQR was established in September 1999 as a result of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act 1998 (“The Act”) (Pub. L. 105–185). The Act included mandates to perform scientific peer reviews of all research activities conducted by USDA. The office manages the ARS peer review system by centrally coordinating all intramural peer review functions for ARS research projects on a 5-year cycle.

Each set of reviews is assigned a chairperson to govern the panel review process. Peer reviewers are external to the Agency and non-ARS scientists. Peer review panels are convened to assess the technical/scientific quality and correctness of each research project plan. Each panel reviewer receives information on a range of two to five ARS research projects.

On average, 150 research projects are reviewed annually by an estimated 185 reviewers. Whereby approximately 130 are reviewed by a panel and approximately 20 are reviewed through an ad hoc (written review) process. The management and execution of this peer review process is vastly dependent on the use of these forms.

The OSQR will seek OMB approval of the following forms:

1. **Confidentiality Agreement Form:** USDA uses this form to document that a selected reviewer is responsible for keeping confidential any information learned during the subject peer review process. The Confidentiality Agreement is signed before the reviewer’s involvement in the peer review process. The form requires an original signature and can be submitted electronically.

2. **Panelist Information Form:** USDA uses this form to gather the most recent background information and diversity and inclusion data about the reviewer, and information relevant to paying an honorarium and travel expenses when needed. Sensitive information is

transmitted on this form and destroyed after payment is received.

3. **Peer Review of an ARS Research Project Form (Peer Review Form):** USDA uses this form to guide the reviewer’s expert comments in written form on the assigned project plan. The form contains the criteria for plan review and seeks the reviewer’s narrative comments and evaluation.

3. **Additional Reviewer Comment Form:** This form is supplied to members of a panel not assigned as a primary or secondary reviewer on a particular project plan; however, it encourages additional expert comments or recommendations for any plan regardless of a reviewer’s assignment as primary or secondary.

4. **Ad Hoc Review Form:** USDA uses this in select cases (e.g., for reviewers not participating in a panel review). It contains a check-off listing of action classes that allows reviewers to provide an overall rating of the plan.

5. **Recommendations for ARS Research Project Form**

(**Recommendations Form**): USDA uses this form to guide the panel’s evaluation and critique of the review process. The form combines both primary and secondary reviewers’ recommendations of the research project plan.

6. **Panel Expense Report Form (Expense Report):** USDA uses this form to document a panel reviewer’s expense incurred traveling to and attending a peer review meeting. The expense report asks reviewers to list lodging, meal, and transportation expenses. When completed, the form contains sensitive information and is held in compliance with ARS travel guidelines. This form is used only in rare circumstance when a panel meeting requires that reviewers travel.

(1) USDA’s collection of information on the Confidentiality Agreement Form is needed to document that a selected reviewer is responsible for keeping confidential any information learned during the subject peer review process. The Confidentiality Agreement would be signed before the reviewer’s involvement in the peer review process.

(2) USDA's collection of information on the Panelist Information Form is needed to collect the most recent background information along with diversity and inclusion data about the reviewer. It contains sensitive information.

(3) USDA's collection of information on the Peer Review Form and Reviewer Comment Form is needed to guide reviewers' comments on the subject project. Both contain review guidance and space to insert comments.

(4) USDA's collection of information on the Ad Hoc Review Form is needed to guide reviewer comments of those not participating in a chaired panel and affords a place to select an overall Action Class rating for the plan.

(5) USDA's collection of information on the Recommendations Form is needed to guide the panel's critique of the review process. It contains the recommendations of the panel for the subject research project.

(6) USDA's collection of information on the Expense Report Form is needed to document a panel reviewer's expenses incurred by attending a peer review meeting. The Expense Report requests lodging, meal, and

transportation expense data. It includes sensitive information.

Estimate of Burden: The burden associated with this approval process is the minimum required to successfully achieve program objectives. The information collection frequency is the minimum consistent with program objectives. The following estimates of time required to complete the forms, based on previous OSQR experience with our current business model.

1. Confidentiality Agreement Form (10 minutes completion time). The reviewer must read and consider the terms of the agreement and then sign and date the form.

2. Chair and Panelist Information Form (30 minutes completion time). The reviewer provides standard personal and diversity information, similar to that found in grant review programs.

3. Panelist Peer Review of an ARS Research Project Form (4–7 hours completion time). Project page lengths will vary. Reviewers may freely write as much as they wish and complete the form. To adequately evaluate a research project plan that may exceed 60–70 pages in length, each reviewer must thoroughly read each plan.

4. Reviewer Comment Form (60 minutes completion time). General assessment of the plan with brief comments on the approach and feasibility of the project and about one page.

5. Panel Recommendation for ARS Research Project Form (30–60 minutes completion time). The page length significantly varies among panelist peer reviews and reviewer comments. All recommendation forms are completed by the OSQR and further discussed and revised by the reviewers as part of their panel discussions. In-person panels are handled in the same manner.

5. Panel Expense Report Form (30 minutes completion time).

Respondents and Estimated Number of Respondents: Selected scientific experts currently working in the same discipline as the research projects being peer reviewed. These external experts are credible peers to ARS. Annually, about 185 peer reviewers complete these forms. Most all plans are discussed and deliberated via webinar and telephone conferencing. Travel is not generally necessary. Thus, reviewers are not expected to complete Panel Expense Reports.

FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE

Form	Number of respondents	Annual frequency
Confidentiality Agreement	185	1 per respondent (Total = 185).
Peer Review Forms (required and assigned 2 plans)	200	2 per panel respondent (Total = 400).
Reviewer Comment Form (reviewer is not assigned as primary or secondary review)	6	2 per panel respondent (Total = 12).
Expense Report (in-person reviewers)	6	1 per respondent (Total = 6).
Panelist Information Forms	185	1 per respondent/per form (Total = 185).
Recommendations Form (non-online project reviews)	82	2 per respondent (Total = 164).

ESTIMATED TOTAL ANNUAL BURDEN ON RESPONDENTS

Form (time required to complete)	Number completed annually	Total burden (hours)
Confidentiality Agreement (10 minutes)	185	31
Panelist Information Forms (30 minutes)	185	93
Peer Review Forms (~6 hours)	200	1,200
Recommendations Form (2 hour)	82	164
Reviewer Comment Form (1 hour)	6	6
Expense Report (30 minutes)	6	3

Authority: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. chap. 35.

Comments: The Notice is soliciting comments from members of the public and affected agencies concerning the proposed collection of information to (1) evaluate whether the proposed collection is necessary for the proper performance of ARS functions, including whether the information will

have practical utility; (2) evaluate the accuracy of the estimated burden from proposed collection of information; (3) enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology (e.g., permitting electronic

submission of responses). 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: March 27, 2019.

Simon Y. Liu,

Associate Administrator, Agricultural Research Service.

[FR Doc. 2019-08689 Filed 4-29-19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-03-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Research Service

Notice of Intent To Seek Renewal of an Information Collection

AGENCY: Agricultural Research Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and applicable regulations of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), this notice announces the intention of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to seek reinstatement of the ARS Animal Health National Program Assessment Survey. This voluntary information collection will give the beneficiaries of ARS research the opportunity to provide input on the impact of research conducted by ARS in the last national program cycle for each respective national program. This input will be used in planning the research agenda for the next 5-year program cycle.

DATES: Comments must be received by July 1, 2019 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments concerning this notice to Ms. Janice Boarman, Program Analyst, Agricultural Research Service, Office of National Programs, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Room 4-2116, Beltsville, Maryland 20705. Submit electronic comments to Janice.Boarman@ars.usda.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Janice Boarman at (301) 504-4764.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: ARS Animal Health National Program Assessment Evaluation Form.
OMB Number: 0518-0042.

Expiration Date: June 30, 2019.

Type of Request: Approval to seek reinstatement of the ARS Animal Health National Program Assessment Survey. This voluntary information collection will give the beneficiaries of ARS research the opportunity to provide input on the impact of research conducted by ARS in the last national program cycle for each respective national program. This survey seeks input from the beneficiaries of research conducted by ARS for program planning and helps ensure alignment of the ARS

national programs with the needs of its customers, partners, and stakeholders.

Abstract: ARS research covers the span of nutrition, food safety and quality, animal and plant production and protection, and natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems. It is organized into fifteen national programs that address specific areas of this research. These national programs serve to bring coordination, communication, and empowerment to approximately 690 research projects carried out by ARS and focus on the relevance, impact, and quality of ARS research. The requested voluntary electronic evaluation survey will give the beneficiaries of ARS research the opportunity to provide input on the impact of several ARS national programs. For the purpose of this National Program Assessment, impact is defined as research that has influenced or will significantly influence the area covered by the national program; has created or will create information, best practices, and/or economic opportunities for the national program's customers, partners, and stakeholders; or has enabled or will enable action and regulatory agencies to formulate policies and regulations to support American agriculture. The report and evaluation form will be available online through a dedicated URL. The input provided through the completion of the evaluation form will be shared with customers, partners, and stakeholders as part of each national program assessment process.

ARS has fifteen national programs, each of which is assessed every 5 years on a rotating basis as part of the ARS national program planning cycle to ensure the relevance, quality, and impact of ARS research. The assessment serves as both a retrospective evaluation and as the foundation for future priority setting for the Agency. Although the exact process for an assessment varies by the nature of the national program, all assessments include the following four stages:

- An in-house program assessment and document review of accomplishments and/or progress for presentation to external reviewers;
- An external review of accomplishments and/or progress based on the preceding documentation review and focused on the relevance, quality, and impact of the research;
- Record the results of the review; and
- Inform ARS leadership of the evaluation results.

All the methodologies for an assessment include developing a written report of accomplishments from

research conducted during the previous 5 years. One assessment method involves sending the accomplishment report to a broad group of informed stakeholders and asking them to respond by completing an online survey about the impact of the national program. This survey information is then compiled into a report that can be shared with stakeholders and ARS Administrators. The survey information can also be used for the next step of the national program planning cycle, which entails planning for the following 5 years.

This survey previously has been used by only one ARS national program, but interest in its use has expanded. Three national programs will use the survey within the 3-year information collection period, which has been included in the burden hour estimate. Because the ARS national program planning cycle is 5 years in length and is staggered among national programs, only one or two national programs will be using the survey in any given year. The survey consists of a set of questions used in common by several or all national programs and a few questions specific to a given national program.

Estimate of Burden: Completing the electronic evaluation form is estimated to average 15 minutes per response.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 600.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 150 hours.

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 the assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the input provided by a wide array of customers, and; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technology. Comments should be sent to the address in the preamble. 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: April 3, 2019.

Simon Y. Liu,

Associate Administrator, ARS.

[FR Doc. 2019-08690 Filed 4-29-19; 8:45 am]

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