

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

DATES: Comments must be received by May 2, 2022 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, GWCC, Room 2-2035, Beltsville, Maryland 20705-5138. Submit electronic comments to Janice.Boarman@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: September 30, 2022.

Type of Request: Approval to seek reinstatement of the ARS Animal Health National Program Assessment Survey. This voluntary information collection will give beneficiaries of ARS research the opportunity to provide input on the impact of the research conducted by ARS in the last National Program cycle for the Animal Health National Program. This survey seeks input from beneficiaries of research conducted by ARS for program planning and ensures alignment of the ARS National Programs with the needs of our 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 addressing specific areas of this research. These National Programs serve to bring coordination, communication, and prioritization to approximately 660 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 beneficiaries of ARS research the opportunity to provide input on the impact of the ARS Animal Health

National Program. 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 electronic 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, stakeholders, and ARS Administrators as part of the National Program's assessment process. ARS National Program Assessments are conducted every 5 years as part of 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. The electronic evaluation form will allow ARS to outreach to its many customers, partners and stakeholders that are unable to participate in planned assessment meetings and also ensures an efficient means of obtaining the greatest amount of input on the impact and direction of the ARS Animal Health 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.

Simon Y. Liu,

Associate Administrator, ARS.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

February 28, 2022.

The Department of Agriculture has submitted the following information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Comments are requested regarding; whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and 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.

Comments regarding this information collection received by April 4, 2022 will be considered. Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. Find this particular information collection by selecting "Currently under 30-day Review—Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number and the agency informs potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information that such persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Food and Nutrition Service

Title: Fourth Access, Participation, Eligibility, and Certification Study (APEC IV).

OMB Control Number: 0584-0530.

Summary of Collection: USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) depends upon the APEC study series to provide reliable, national estimates of errors and improper payments made to school districts in which the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) are operated. This is the fourth study in the APEC series and it will provide the required information for school year (SY) 2023–2024.

The Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 (PIIA) requires that FNS identify and reduce improper payments in these programs, including both underpayments and overpayments. In order to comply with the law, programs must have a statistically valid rate of improper payment below 10 percent, and programs out of compliance with PIIA are subject to increased scrutiny and reporting requirements.

Need and Use of the Information: The specific study objectives of APEC IV are: Objective 1: Generate a national estimate of the annual amount of improper payments in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program based on SY 2023–2024 by replicating and refining the methodology used in prior APEC studies. Objective 2: Provide a robust examination of the relationship between error rates and student (household), school, and school food authority (SFA) characteristics. Objective 3: Conduct two sub-studies testing the effect that data collection methods have on responses.

APEC IV will collect data to measure certification, aggregation, and meal claiming errors via in-person visits to SFAs and schools and surveys of SFA directors and households. Data collection will include (a) abstraction from income eligibility applications and categorical eligibility records; (b) abstraction of meal count and claiming records from SFAs, schools, States, and FNS administrative data; (c) an online survey of SFA directors; (d) meal observations in schools; and (e) a telephone survey of households.

Description of Respondents: Individuals/Households, State, Local, or Tribal government.

Number of Respondents: 13,068.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting Once, Annually.

Total Burden Hours: 21,013.

Ruth Brown,

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

[Docket No. RHS-19-MFH-0024]

New Fee Structure for Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program Initial and Annual Guarantee Fees

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Rural Housing Service (RHS or the Agency), a Rural Development agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is announcing a new fee structure for the Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program (GRRHP) initial and annual guarantee fees.

DATES: The effective date of the revised fees is April 4, 2022.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tammy Daniels, Finance and Loan Analyst, Multi-Family Housing Production and Preservation Division, Rural Housing Service, USDA, STOP 0781, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-0781, Telephone: (202) 720-0021 (this is not a toll-free number); email: tammy.daniels@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority

The RHS administers the 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program (GRRHP) loans under the authority of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1490p-2) and operates under 7 CFR part 3565. As set forth in 7 CFR part 3565, the Agency will publish any changes to the fees in a Notice in the **Federal Register**.

Background

RHS administers the Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program (GRRHP) under the authority of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1490p-2). Under the GRRHP, RHS guarantees loans for the development of housing and related facilities in rural areas. Section 538(g) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to charge certain fees to lenders for loan guarantees (see, 42 U.S.C. 1490p-2(g)). The fees charged are used to cover the costs of loan guarantees pursuant to the provisions of the Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*).

On December 3, 2020, the Agency published a final rule in the **Federal Register** at 85 FR 77985 with an effective date of January 4, 2021, which amended 7 CFR part 3565 by removing the stated amount that the Agency will

charge for the initial and annual guarantee fees. This regulation update affords the program the flexibility and ability to create the maximum housing affordability to residents by lowering program costs when practical, without the need for a regulatory change. As stated in the final rule, if changes occur in the fee amounts, the Agency will release those changes through a Notice in the **Federal Register** and will provide guidance on how to process the loans which will be impacted by the new fee structure. Interested parties will be able to locate current fees on the Agency's website at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multifamily-housing-programs/multifamily-housing-loan-guarantees>.

New Fee Structure

Projects with a fully executed (signed by both the Agency and Lender) conditional commitment as of the date this notice is published, or a loan obligated prior to October 1, 2021 are ineligible for the reduced fees. Loans in the following three categories will receive a greater reductions in the fees: (1) Green and Energy Efficient, (2) Preservation of Existing Section 515, 514/516 Rural Development Properties, and (3) Workforce Housing. The overall status of the GRRHP portfolio is healthy. There is a low delinquency rate, the program operates at a negative subsidy, and the program has used all or most of its appropriations in the past 5 years. The initial and annual guarantee fee is usually passed on to the borrower. Reducing the fees will decrease the debt service for future loans which will ultimately decrease the rents and provide savings to the tenants, allow more funds to be allocated toward capital improvements while continuing to offset the cost to operate the program.

On February 18, 2021, the Agency conducted a forum soliciting feedback from Section 538 lenders, borrowers, and program stakeholders. The general feedback was that the new fee structure for the initial and annual guarantee fees should take into account affordability and target projects whose rents are at 60 percent Area Median Income (AMI) and have current government subsidies. The new fee structure being implemented has taken this into account by providing greater reduced fees for preservation of existing Section 515, 514/516 Rural Development properties.

The annual fee will not be changed for existing Section 538 GRRHP loans. At the discretion of the Agency, Section 538 GRRHP loans that are refinanced or modified after the revised fee structure goes into effect and can successfully demonstrate that the reduced fee results