

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 89, No. 124

Thursday, June 27, 2024

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

[Docket No. USDA–2024–0003]

Procedures for Quantification, Reporting, and Verification of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Associated With the Production of Domestic Agricultural Commodities Used as Biofuel Feedstocks

AGENCY: Office of the Chief Economist, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Request for information.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking public input on procedures for the quantification, reporting, and verification of the effect of climate-smart farming practices on the greenhouse gas (GHG) net emissions estimates associated with the production of domestic (*i.e.*, grown in the U.S.) agricultural commodities used as biofuel feedstocks. Agricultural management practices that mitigate GHG emissions and/or sequester soil carbon can be integrated into GHG analysis to reflect the differing GHG outcomes of feedstocks based on their production. However, many clean transportation fuel programs currently do not assign lower carbon intensity (CI) estimates (*i.e.*, lower lifecycle GHG emissions of the fuel per unit of energy) to crops grown with climate-smart practices relative to the same crops grown with conventional farming practices. This Request for Information seeks information on practices that have the potential to mitigate GHG emissions and/or sequester carbon, and quantification, reporting, and verification approaches for the GHG outcomes associated with domestic agricultural commodities used as biofuel feedstocks.

DATES: Comments must be received by July 25, 2024, to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments concerning

this notice by either of the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Portal:** Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket No. USDA–2024–0003. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

All comments submitted in response to this notice will be included in the record, will be made available to the public, and can be viewed at: <https://www.regulations.gov>. Please be advised that the identity of the individuals or entities submitting the comments will be made available to the public on the internet at the address provided above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Contact William Hohenstein, Director of Office of Energy and Environmental Policy, at (202) 720–0450, or via email at sm.oce.oep.CSABiofuels@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is considering a rulemaking to establish voluntary standards for quantifying, reporting, and verifying GHG outcomes for domestic agricultural commodities used as biofuel feedstocks and grown with practices that mitigate GHG emissions and/or sequester soil carbon. These standards would be available for consideration by entities that operate international, national, or state clean transportation fuel policies.

In establishing these standards, USDA may utilize its authorities under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, section 2709 (16 U.S.C. 3845: Environmental services markets). Section 2709 directs the Secretary to “establish technical guidelines that outline science-based methods to measure the environmental services benefits from conservation and land management activities in order to facilitate the participation of farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in emerging environmental services markets.” It also directs the Secretary to “give priority to the establishment of guidelines related to farmer, rancher, and forest landowner participation in carbon markets.” It further directs the Secretary to establish verification guidelines, including “the role of third-parties in conducting independent verification of benefits produced for environmental services markets and other functions.” Because of the existence of clean transportation fuel programs, there is an existing environmental service market for

biofuel feedstocks. The potential incorporation of feedstocks produced with climate-smart practices into these programs represents an emerging environmental service market opportunity for farmers.

Feedstock production contributes a significant percentage of the GHG emissions associated with crop-based biofuel production. However, clean transportation fuel programs typically base their feedstock production emissions estimates on average farming practices which include a range of both conventional and climate-smart farming practices. There is an opportunity to improve the empirical basis and verifiability of the effects of climate-smart farming practices on net GHG emissions, and to quantify net GHG emissions reductions more specifically to only those feedstocks grown with such practices. Standards that differentiate between crops grown with and without climate-smart farming practices could incentivize further adoption of climate-smart farming and corresponding reductions in GHG emissions.

A greater adoption of climate-smart farming practices could lower overall GHG emissions associated with biofuel production and provide other environmental benefits, such as improved water quality and soil health. Accurate quantification and verification are important to ensure that net GHG emissions reductions are real. Improving the ability to accurately quantify and verify the GHG outcomes of climate-smart farming practices can also provide additional benefits, including improved credibility and confidence in a variety of climate-smart markets.

The information received in response to this notice will inform a potential USDA rulemaking on these topics as well as future improvements to quantification methodologies.

Questions for Commenters

Qualifying Practices

(1) Which domestic biofuel feedstocks should USDA consider including in its analysis to quantify the GHG emissions associated with climate smart farming practices? USDA is considering corn, soybeans, sorghum, and spring canola as these are the dominant biofuel feedstock crops in the United States. USDA is also considering winter oilseed crops

(brassica carinata, camelina, pennycress, and winter canola). Are there other potential biofuel feedstocks, including crops, crop residues and biomaterials, that USDA should analyze?

(2) Which farming practices should USDA consider including in its analysis to quantify the GHG emissions outcomes for biofuel feedstocks? Practices that can reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with specific feedstocks and/or increase soil carbon sequestration may include, but are not limited to: conservation tillage, no-till, planting of cover crops, incorporation of buffer strips, and nitrogen management (e.g., applying fertilizer in the right source, rate, place and time, including using enhanced efficiency fertilizers, biological fertilizers or amendments, or manure). Should practices (and crops) that reduce water consumption be considered, taking into account the energy needed to transport water for irrigation? Should the farming practices under consideration vary by feedstock and/or by location? If so, how and why?

(3) For practices identified in question 2, how should these practices be defined? What parameters should USDA specify so that the GHG outcomes (as opposed to other environmental and economic benefits) resulting from the practices can be quantified, reported, and verified?

(4) For practices identified in question 2, to what extent do variations in practice implementation affect the overall GHG benefits of the practice (e.g., the date at which cover crops are harvested or terminated)? What implementation strategies maximize the GHG benefits of these climate-smart agriculture practices?

Quantification

(5) What scientific data, information, and analysis should USDA consider when quantifying the greenhouse gas emissions outcomes of climate-smart agricultural practices and conventional farming practices? What additional analysis should USDA prioritize to improve the accuracy and reliability of the GHG estimates? How should USDA account for uncertainty in scientific data? How should USDA analysis be updated over time?

(6) Given the degree of geographic variability associated with each practice, on what geographic scale should USDA quantify the GHG net emissions of each practice (e.g., farm-level, county-level, state, regional, national)? What are the pros and cons of each scale? How should differences in local and regional conditions be addressed?

(7) How should USDA estimate the GHG emissions and soil carbon fluxes of baseline crop production?

(8) Where models can be used to quantify changes in greenhouse gas emissions and sinks associated with climate smart agricultural practices, which model(s) are most appropriate for quantifying the greenhouse gas effects of these practices? What are the tradeoffs of different modeling approaches for accurately representing carbon, methane, and nitrous oxide fluxes under climate smart agricultural practices?

(9) How should net greenhouse gas emissions, including soil carbon sequestration, be attributed among crops produced in a rotation, for example crops grown in rotation with one or multiple cover crops?

(10) To what extent do interactions between practices either enhance or reduce the GHG emissions outcomes of each practice? Where multiple practices are implemented in combination, should the impacts of these practices be measured individually or collectively?

(11) How should the GHG emissions of nutrient management practices (e.g., applying fertilizer according to the “4Rs” of nutrient management—right place, right source, right time, and right rate; variable rate technology; enhanced efficiency fertilizer application; manure application) be quantified? What empirical data exist to inform the quantification? What factors should USDA consider when quantifying the GHG emissions outcomes of these practices?

Soil Carbon

(12) How should the GHG outcomes of soil management practices that can increase carbon sequestration or reduce carbon dioxide emissions (e.g., no-till, cover crops) be quantified? What empirical data exist to inform the quantification? Over what time scale should practices that sequester soil carbon be implemented to achieve measurable and durable GHG benefits?

(13) For practices that can increase soil carbon sequestration or reduce carbon dioxide emissions, how should the duration and any interruptions of practice (e.g., length of time practice is continued, whether the practice is put in place continually or with interruptions) be considered when assessing the effects on soil carbon sequestration?

(14) How should the baseline rates of change in soil carbon and uncertainty around the greenhouse gas benefits of these practices be characterized? Does this uncertainty and variability depend on the type or longevity/permanence of the practice?

Verification and Recordkeeping

(15) What records, documentation, and data are necessary to provide sufficient evidence to verify practice adoption and maintenance? What records are typically maintained, why, and by whom? Where possible, please be specific to recommended practices (e.g., refer to practices identified in question two).

(16) How can market participants leverage remote sensing and/or other emergent technologies as an option to verify practice adoption and maintenance?

(17) Are there existing reporting structures that can potentially be leveraged?

(18) Should on-site audits be used to verify practice adoption and maintenance and if so, to what extent, and on what frequency?

(19) If only a sample of farm/fields are audited on-site, what sampling methodology should be used to determine the sample of farms selected for an on-site audit, and how can the sampling methodology ensure that selected farms are representative across geographies, crops, and other factors?

(20) What system(s) should be used to trace feedstocks throughout biofuel feedstock supply chains (e.g., mass balance, book and claim, identity preservation, geolocation of fields where practices are adopted)? What data do these tracking systems need to collect? What are the pros and cons of these traceability systems? How should this information be verified?

Verifier Qualifications/Accreditation Requirements

(21) How could USDA best utilize independent third-parties (i.e., unrelated party certifiers) to bolster verification of practice adoption and maintenance and/or supply chain traceability? What standards or processes should be in place to prevent conflicts of interest between verifiers and the entities they oversee?

(22) What qualifications should independent third-party verifiers of practice adoption and/or supply chain traceability possess?

(23) What independent third-party verification systems currently exist that may be relevant for use in the context of verifying climate-smart agricultural practices (as identified under questions 1 and 2) and/or biofuel supply chains?

(24) How should oversight of verifiers be performed? What procedures should be in place if an independent third-party verifier fails to conform to verification and audit requirements, or otherwise conducts verification inappropriately?

(25) What procedures should be in place to prevent potential inaccurate or fraudulent claims regarding feedstock production practices or chain of custody claims, how should monitoring occur to identify such inaccurate claims, and what should the remedy be when such inaccurate claims are discovered?

(26) What preemptive measures are appropriate to guard program integrity against both potential intentional fraud and inadvertent reversal or nonaccrual of credited GHG emissions benefits?

William Hohenstein,

Director, Office of Energy and Environmental Policy.

[FR Doc. 2024-14126 Filed 6-26-24; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-GL-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Office of the Secretary

[Docket No.: 240612-0157]

Public Availability of Department of Commerce FY 2022 Service Contract Inventory Data

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public availability.

SUMMARY: In accordance with section 743 of division C of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010, the Department of Commerce (DOC) is publishing this notice to advise the public of the availability of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Service Contract Inventory data, a report that analyzes DOC's FY 2022 Service Contract Inventory and a plan for the analysis of FY 2023 Service Contract Inventory.

ADDRESSES: The Department of Commerce's FY 2022 Service Contract Inventory is included in the government-wide inventory available at: <https://www.acquisition.gov/service-contract-inventory>, which can be filtered to display the FY 2022 inventory for each agency. In addition to the link to access DOC's FY 2022 service contract inventory, the FY 2022 Analysis Report and Plan for analyzing the FY 2023 data is on the Office of Acquisition Management homepage at the following link: <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/resources/service-contract-inventory>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions regarding the service contract inventory should be directed to Virna Winters, Executive Director, Acquisition Policy, Oversight and Workforce at 202-482-4248 or vwinters@doc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The service contract inventory provides

information on service contract actions over \$150,000 made in FY 2022. The information is organized by function to show how contracted resources are distributed throughout the agency. The inventory has been developed in accordance with guidance on service contract inventories issued on November 5, 2010, by the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 4.17. DOC is publishing this notice to advise the public of the availability of the FY 2022 Service Contract Inventory data and a plan for the analysis of FY 2023 Service Contract Inventory.

Olivia J. Bradley,

Senior Procurement Executive and Director for Acquisition Management.

[FR Doc. 2024-14118 Filed 6-26-24; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-DT-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

International Trade Administration

Corporation for Travel Promotion Board of Directors

AGENCY: International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of an opportunity for travel and tourism industry leaders to apply for membership on the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Travel Promotion (Corporation).

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce (Department) is currently seeking applications from travel and tourism leaders from specific industry sectors for membership on the Board of Directors (Board) of the Corporation (doing business as Brand USA). The purpose of the Board is to guide the Corporation on matters relating to the promotion of the United States as a travel destination and communication of travel facilitation issues, among other tasks.

DATES: All applications must be received by the National Travel and Tourism Office by close of business on Friday, September 6, 2024.

ADDRESSES: Please submit application information by email to CTPBoard@trade.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Curt Cottle, National Travel and Tourism Office, U.S. Department of Commerce; telephone: 202-482-4601; email: CTPBoard@trade.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Travel Promotion Act of 2009 (TPA) was signed into law on March 4, 2010, and

was amended in July 2010, December 2014, and again in December 2019. The TPA established the Corporation as a non-profit corporation charged with the development and execution of a plan to (A) provide useful information to those interested in traveling to the United States; (B) identify and address perceptions regarding U.S. entry policies; (C) maximize economic and diplomatic benefits of travel to the United States through the use of various promotional tools; (D) ensure that international travel benefits all States, territories of the United States, and the District of Columbia; (E) identify opportunities to promote tourism to rural and urban areas equally, including areas not traditionally visited by international travelers; (F) give priority to countries and populations most likely to travel to the United States; and (G) promote tourism to the United States through digital media, online platforms, and other appropriate mediums.

The Corporation is governed by a Board of Directors, consisting of 11 members with knowledge of international travel promotion or marketing, broadly representing various regions of the United States. The TPA directs the Secretary of Commerce (after consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of State) to appoint the Board for the Corporation.

At this time, the Department will be selecting four individuals with the appropriate expertise and experience from specific sectors of the travel and tourism industry to serve on the Board as follows:

1. One member having appropriate expertise and experience as a State Tourism Office representative;
2. One member having appropriate expertise and experience as a City Convention and Visitors' Bureau representative;
3. One member having appropriate expertise and experience in the Hotel Accommodations sector; and
4. One member having appropriate expertise and experience in the Restaurant sector.

To be eligible for Board membership, individuals must have international travel and tourism marketing experience, and be a current or former chief executive officer, chief financial officer, or chief marketing officer or have held an equivalent management position. Additional consideration will be given to individuals who have experience working in U.S. multinational entities with marketing budgets, and/or who are audit committee financial experts as defined by the Securities and Exchange