

Notices

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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

Farm Service Agency

[Docket ID FSA–2023–0005]

Application Fast Track Pilot Program—Extension

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.
ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is announcing the extension of the Application Fast Track (AFT) pilot program that was published August 3, 2023 (88 FR 51260–51265), and extended September 30, 2024 (89 FR 79504), which continues the expedited processing of qualified direct Operating Loans (OL) and Farm Ownership Loans (FO) to family farmers and ranchers. AFT has been available to all customers nationwide since January 1, 2024. AFT is being extended to allow for an expanded number of applicants that qualify for AFT and to allow FSA time to make the program permanent through publication of a final rule. FSA will see the pilot run until December 31, 2026 or until the aforementioned final rule is published, whichever is sooner. This will allow time for FSA to continue to evaluate the administrative effectiveness of AFT while drafting the final rule. The initial results of AFT reflect a significant improvement in processing times for all customers, and FSA is continuing to monitor loan performance, and overall satisfaction with the AFT pilot program from both customers and staff.

DATES: The effective date for the extension of AFT as provided in this notice is December 30, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Houston Bruck; telephone: (202) 650–7874; email: Houston.Bruck@usda.gov. Individuals with disabilities who require alternative means for communication should contact the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720–2600 (voice and text telephone (TTY)) or

dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay service (both voice and text telephone users can initiate this call from any telephone).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

FSA is extending the “Application Fast Track” that was published August 3, 2023 (88 FR 51260–51265), which continues the expedited processing of qualified direct OLs and FOs to family farmers and ranchers. AFT provides an alternative underwriting process for applicants that meet certain financial benchmarks. AFT has been available to all customers nationwide since January 1, 2024. FSA is expanding AFT, enabling an increased number of applicants to qualify for the streamlined AFT process and will see the pilot run until December 31, 2026 or until FSA publishes a final rule to codify the program, whichever is sooner. All other AFT pilot provisions are unchanged in this notice from what was announced in the August 3, 2023, notice.

The August 3, 2023 notice that originally announced the pilot program (88 FR 51260–51265) provided specific details regarding which sections of 7 CFR parts 761, 764, and 765 were waived for the pilot program because they would have been contradictory to the alternative underwriting process that AFT provides. Those sections of the CFR will be amended before December 31, 2026, to permanently codify the alternative underwriting process provided by AFT. The affected sections of the CFR are: 7 CFR 761.8(a); 7 CFR 761.103(b)(6) and (7); 7 CFR 761.103(c)(2) and (4); 7 CFR 761.104 (c), (d), (e), (f), and (g); 7 CFR 764.107(b)(1); 7 CFR 764.154(a)(2); 7 CFR 764.154(b) and (b)(1); 7 CFR 764.254(a)(2); 7 CFR 764.254(b)(2); 7 CFR 764.401(a)(1)(i) and (b)(1); 7 CFR 764.453(a) and (b); and 7 CFR 765.105(b).

Authority

The authority to conduct AFT is provided in section 333D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (CONACT, 7 U.S.C. 1983d), which authorizes pilot projects of limited scope and duration to evaluate processes and techniques to improve program efficiency and effectiveness.

AFT Initial Results

The initial results of AFT reflect a significant improvement in processing times for all customers, with no impact to portfolio performance and loan repayment. FSA is continuing to monitor loan performance, overall satisfaction with the AFT pilot program from both customers and staff, and the administrative effectiveness of AFT. The initial results of the AFT pilot program have resulted in approximately 23 percent of customers qualifying for AFT, with significant reduction in processing time for those applications of approximately 8 calendar days. FSA portfolio performance, loan repayment rates, and delinquency rates, have not been impacted by AFT.

Contact Information

Questions on AFT may be directed to the Farm Loan Programs staff in the local FSA county office. The local FSA county office may be found at <http://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/USDA-service-centers>.

Paperwork Reduction Act Requirements

In accordance with the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), there are no changes to the information collection approved by OMB under control numbers 0560–0236 and 0560–0237.

Environmental Review

The environmental impacts have been considered in a manner consistent with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321–4347) and the USDA regulation for compliance with NEPA (7 CFR part 1b).

The purpose of AFT is to improve internal underwriting processes to expedite Farm Loan Programs application processing. The limited discretionary aspects of AFT do not have the potential to impact the human environment as they are administrative. Accordingly, these discretionary aspects are covered by the FSA Categorical Exclusions specified in 7 CFR 1b.4(c)(1)(i) that applies to Farm Loan Programs, provided no extraordinary circumstances are found to exist. As such, the implementation of AFT and the participation in AFT do not constitute major Federal actions that would significantly affect the quality of

the human environment, individually or cumulatively. Therefore, FSA will not prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement for this action and this document serves as documentation of the programmatic environmental compliance decision for this federal action.

Federal Assistance Programs

The title and number of the Federal assistance programs, as found in the Assistance Listing, to which this document applies is 10.406 Farm Operating Loans and 10.407 Farm Ownership Loans.

William Beam,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

[Docket ID: FSA-2025-0268]

Information Collection Request; Organic Certification Cost Share Program

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) is requesting comments from all interested individuals and organizations on a revision of a currently approved information collection request associated with the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP).

DATES: We will consider comments that we receive by March 2, 2026.

ADDRESSES: We invite you to submit comments on this notice. You may submit comments by this method: *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to: www.regulations.gov and search for Docket ID FSA-2025-0268. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

You may also send comments to the Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503. Copies of the information collection may be requested by contacting Jenae Orso.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For specific questions related to collection activity, contact Jenae Orso; (229) 850-0194; email: jenae.prescott@usda.gov. Individuals who require alternative means of communication for program information should contact the USDA

Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice) or dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Service (both voice and text telephone users can initiate this call from any telephone).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

OCCSP provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Section 10606 of H.R. 1 (Pub. L. 119-21, also referred to as the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act”) authorized \$10,000,000 in National OCCSP funding for fiscal years 2025 through 2031 (7 U.S.C. 6523(d)). An additional \$1,000,000 in Agricultural Management Assistance funding is available for each fiscal year (7 U.S.C. 1524(b)). This notice announces that FSA is requesting comments from all interested individuals and organizations on a revision of a currently approved information collection request associated with OCCSP. FSA will announce the OCCSP application periods for certified organic operations and State Agencies in a future final rule.

Description of Information Collection Request

Title: Organic Certification Cost Share Program.

OMB Control Number: 0560-0289.

Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved information collection.

OMB Expiration Date: March 31, 2026.

Abstract: FSA is requesting comments from all interested individuals and organizations on a revision of a currently approved information collection request associated with OCCSP. OCCSP provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the National Organic Program (NOP).

To receive cost share assistance, producers and handlers submit an application form and itemized invoices showing expenses paid to a third-party certifying agency for certification services during the fiscal year for which the application is submitted. Producers and handlers who apply through State Agencies must also submit a W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification. Producers and handlers who apply through FSA county office must submit AD-2047, Customer Data Worksheet, and SF-3881, ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous

Payment Enrollment Form, if not already on file with FSA.

FSA also accepts applications from State Agencies to establish grant agreements to administer OCCSP for producers and handlers in their States. Participating State Agencies will submit SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance; a signed Notice of Grant and Agreement Award; SF-425, Federal Financial Report; an annual narrative report, and an annual spreadsheet of organic operations that were reimbursed for eligible expenses. State Agencies will also submit at least one SF-270, Request for Advance of Reimbursement; for the purpose of calculating the burden for this collection, FSA has used an estimate of 2 responses for SF-270, which is the average number submitted by respondents annually in recent years.

FSA is requesting a revision of the approved information collection. The revisions are due to adjustments to the estimated number of respondents based on program participation in recent years, changes to the estimated hours per response for some responses to accurately reflect the time necessary to complete them, updates to reflect the forms currently used for FSA programs to administer grant agreements and collect respondent information, and changes to accurately account for exempt burden hours. For the following estimated total annual burden on respondents, the formula used to calculate the total burden hours is the estimated average time per response hours multiplied by the estimated total annual responses.

Estimate of Respondent Burden:

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.6482 hours per response.

Respondents: Individuals, Businesses, Farms, and State Governments.

Estimated Annual Number of Respondents: 12,030.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 3.7232.

Estimated Total Annual Responses: 44,790.

Estimated Average Time per Response: 0.6482 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 29,031 hours.

We are requesting comments on all aspects of this information collection to help us:

(1) Evaluate 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;

(2) Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information including the