

The subject rice transformation events have been considered regulated articles under the regulations in 7 CFR part 340 because they contain gene sequences from a plant pathogen. Rice transformation events LLRICE06 and LLRICE62 have been field tested in the United States since 1997 under APHIS notifications. In the process of reviewing the notifications for the field trials of this rice, APHIS determined that the trials, which were conducted under conditions of reproductive and physical containment or isolation, would not present a risk of plant pest introduction or dissemination.

In the Federal Plant Pest Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. 150aa *et seq.*), "plant pest" is defined as "any living stage of: Any insects, mites, nematodes, slugs, snails, protozoa, or other invertebrate animals, bacteria, fungi, other parasitic plants or reproductive parts thereof, viruses, or any organisms similar to or allied with any of the foregoing, or any infectious substances, which can directly or indirectly injure or cause disease or damage in any plants or parts thereof, or any processed, manufactured or other products of plants." APHIS views this definition very broadly. The definition covers direct or indirect injury, disease, or damage not just to agricultural crops, but also to plants in general, for example, native species, as well as to organisms that may be beneficial to plants, for example, honeybees, rhizobia, etc.

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for the regulation of pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), as amended (7 U.S.C. 136 *et seq.*). FIFRA requires that all pesticides, including herbicides, be registered prior to distribution or sale, unless exempt by EPA regulation. In cases in which genetically modified plants allow for a new use of an herbicide or involve a different use pattern for the herbicide, EPA must approve the new or different use. When the use of the herbicide on the genetically modified plant would result in an increase in the residues of the herbicide in a food or feed crop for which the herbicide is currently registered, or in new residues in a crop for which the herbicide is not currently registered, establishment of a new tolerance or a revision of the existing tolerance would be required. Residue tolerances for pesticides are established by EPA under the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA), as amended (21 U.S.C. 301 *et seq.*), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) enforces tolerances set by EPA under the FFDCA.

FDA published a statement of policy on foods derived from new plant varieties in the **Federal Register** on May 29, 1992 (57 FR 22984-23005). The FDA statement of policy includes a discussion of FDA's authority for ensuring food safety under the FFDCA, and provides guidance to industry on the scientific considerations associated with the development of foods derived from new plant varieties, including those plants developed through the techniques of genetic engineering. AgrEvo has begun consultation with FDA on the subject rice transformation events.

In accordance with § 340.6(d) of the regulations, we are publishing this notice to inform the public that APHIS will accept written comments regarding the Petition for Determination of Nonregulated Status from any interested person for a period of 60 days from the date of this notice. The petition and any comments received are available for public review, and copies of the petition may be ordered (see the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice).

After the comment period closes, APHIS will review the data submitted by the petitioner, all written comments received during the comment period, and any other relevant information. Based on the available information, APHIS will furnish a response to the petitioner, either approving the petition in whole or in part, or denying the petition. APHIS will then publish a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing the regulatory status of AgrEvo's rice transformation events LLRICE06 and LLRICE62, and the availability of APHIS' written decision.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 150aa-150jj, 151-167, and 1622n; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.2(c).

Done in Washington, DC, this 20th day of January 1999.

Craig A. Reed,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 99-1783 Filed 1-25-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Agricultural Statistics Service

Notice of Intent To Extend and Revise a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), this notice announces the National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS) intention to request an extension for and revision to a currently approved information collection, the Field Crops Objective Yield Surveys.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by April 1, 1999 to be assured of consideration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS:

Contact Rich Allen, Associate Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4117 South Building, Washington DC 20250-2000, (202) 720-4333.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Field Crops Objective Yield.

OMB Number: 0535-0088.

Expiration Date of Approval: July 31, 1999.

Type of Request: Intent to extend and revise a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The primary objective of the National Agricultural Statistics Service is to prepare and issue State and national estimates of crop and livestock production. The Field Crops Objective Yield Surveys objectively predict yields for wheat, corn, cotton, soybeans, and potatoes. Sample fields are randomly selected for these crops. Plots and laid out and periodic counts and measurements are taken and used to forecast production during the growing season. Production forecasts are published in USDA Crop Production reports. An increase in the number of plots is planned. The Field Corps Objective Yield Surveys has approval from OMB for a 3-year period. NASS intends to request that the surveys be approved for another 3 years.

These data will be collected under authority of 7 U.S.C. 2204(a). Individually identifiable data collected under this authority are governed by Section 1770 of the Food Security Act of 1985, 7 U.S.C. 2276, which requires USDA to afford strict confidentiality to non-aggregated data provided by respondents.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 19 minutes per response.

Respondents: Farms and businesses.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 8,100.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 4,200 hours.

Copies of this information collection and related instructions can be obtained without charge from Larry Gambell, the Agency OMB Clearance Officer, at (202) 720-5778.

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, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: Larry Gambrell, Agency OMB Clearance Officer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4162 South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250-2000.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval.

All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Signed at Washington, DC, January 13, 1999.

Rich Allen,

Associate Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service.

[FR Doc. 99-1684 Filed 1-25-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-20-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Suspension of Direct and Guaranteed Loans for Hog Production

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The swine industry is currently in crisis due to over supply and low prices. The Secretary is concerned that, during this period of low prices, the availability of certain RBS credit programs may facilitate additional production capacity that will prolong the current hog price depression. Additional capacity is also likely to damage the prospects for long-term financial recovery in the industry. Continued financial stress on hog

farmers may force and accelerate concentration of the production, processing, and marketing of hogs into fewer hands. This notice temporarily suspends direct Rural Economic Development Loan and Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan financing for the construction of specialized facilities used for the production of hogs.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

William F. Hagy III, Deputy Administrator, Business Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C. 20250-3220, telephone (202) 720-7287.

DATES: January 26, 1999. This notice will be in effect until rescinded by the National Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: State Offices shall direct all questions regarding this notice to the Deputy Administrator, Business Programs. Any application for a direct or guaranteed loan for the construction or expansion of a specialized hog production facility will be accepted but held in abeyance until the suspension is lifted. A specialized hog production facility is defined as any building or enclosure and related equipment specifically to house, raise, or feed hogs of any size, age, or market class.

The loan processing time frames will not apply to these applications while the suspension is in effect. The State Office will notify both the applicant and the lender that the application is being held. All guaranteed lenders should be notified of the suspension.

Direct and guaranteed loan applications for purchase, refinancing, maintenance, or repair of facilities currently in production will continue to be processed. Direct and guaranteed loan applications that were received by Rural Development State Offices on or before the date of this notice will be processed through to completion and will not be affected by this temporary suspension. In all other cases, applications will only be processed when the Government's interest will be imperiled if the application is not processed.

Dated: January 14, 1999.

William F. Hagy III,

Acting Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

[FR Doc. 99-1505 Filed 1-25-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XY-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of the Census

Census 2000 Location Report for American Flag Vessels and Census 2000 Information for American Flag Vessels

ACTION: Proposed collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506 (c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before March 29, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5327, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Requests for additional information or copies of the draft forms should be directed to Charles Moore, Bureau of the Census, SFC2, MS-5700, Room 1304, 4301 Suitland Road, Suitland, Maryland 20746, phone number (301) 457-2050.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The Census Bureau must provide everyone in the United States and Outlying Areas the opportunity to be counted in the Census 2000, including persons living on vessels. To that end, the Census Bureau is currently developing final plans for implementing the Census 2000 Maritime Vessel Enumeration activities. The proposed Census 2000 Location Report for American Flag Vessels and Census 2000 Information for American Flag Vessels operation will greatly facilitate the enumeration of the ship board population and is similar to other vessel enumerations conducted in previous censuses. Beginning in 1999 we will work with the Maritime Administration, American Tuna Boat Association, and other vessel organizations to obtain a list of vessel owners/operators. Each owner/operator will be sent a letter asking for a list of ships and an estimated number of crew and passengers. We will then send questionnaire packages to the owners/operators for each vessel they report and ask that they distribute the packages to