

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 64, No. 155

Thursday, August 12, 1999

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

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket Number LS-99-11]

Notice of Request for New Information Collection

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), this notice announces the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) request for comments on a new information collection related to the delivery of Meat Grading and Certification (MGC) Branch services. This voluntary survey would give MGC Branch's external customers, who are primarily in the livestock and meat industry, an opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of service they are receiving thereby assisting the MGC Branch to continuously improve its services and service delivery.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received on or before October 12, 1999 to be assured of consideration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS: Contact Marlene M. Betts, Assistant to the Chief, Meat Grading and Certification Branch, Livestock and Seed Program, AMS, USDA, STOP 0248, Room 2628-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0248, Telephone (202) 720-1640, or Fax (202) 690-4119.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended, (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627) (Act) directs the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to facilitate the marketing of agricultural products by developing and applying grade standards. Under the Act, AMS offers grading, quality assurance, and certification services for a user-fee, to

facilitate the efficient marketing of meat and meat products in the global marketplace. The MGC Branch provides voluntary quality grading and certification services based on U.S. grade standards and approved specifications to producers, slaughterers, wholesalers, retailers, consumers, brokers, and other financially interested parties involved in the marketing of livestock and meat products.

There are approximately 380 current users of the AMS's, MGC Branch voluntary quality grading and certification services. These customers are located nationwide and represent a diverse mixture of small, medium, and large producers; slaughterers; wholesalers; retailers; brokers; and other financially interested parties. These companies request product grading and certification services from an MGC Branch Area Office. (There are four MGC Branch Area Offices nationwide.)

The mission of the MGC Branch is to provide timely, high-quality, unbiased service that facilitates the orderly marketing and distribution of agricultural commodities, and fosters goodwill in the global marketplace. To accomplish this mission, the MGC Branch needs feedback from customers to evaluate the services that are provided.

Title: Customer Service Survey (Meat Grading and Certification Services).

OMB Number: New collection, a number will be assigned after approval.

Expiration Date of Approval: New collection.

Type of Request: New information collection.

Abstract: The collection of information using a voluntary customer service survey will provide all MGC Branch customers an opportunity to comment on the type and level of services they expect and evaluate the actual services that they receive. This information will assist the MGC Branch in continuously improving its services to meet or exceed customer expectations.

The MGC Branch does not have a formal means of determining its external customer's expectations or the quality of service that is delivered. To collect this information, the MGC Branch proposes to annually distribute a voluntary customer service survey. The information collected from the survey

will be used to evaluate service delivery and assist in planning and managing the program.

The customer service survey consists of one document comprised of 20 inquiry components where customers assess the quality of service that is provided by the MGC Branch. Some examples of survey components customers are asked to assess and respond to include the following: "MGC Branch employees provide service at the date and time requested," "MGC Branch employees provide helpful technical advice," and "Graders working in your facility receive adequate supervision." These survey components will be assessed using a rating scale ranging from "strongly agrees" to "strongly disagrees" or "not applicable." There is also space available on the survey for the customer to provide additional comments they deem appropriate.

Due to the voluntary nature of grading and certification services, MGC Branch customers will use the services only if they receive the quality of service that meets or exceeds their expectations. By obtaining information from customers through a voluntary customer service survey, the MGC Branch could continue to improve its services to meet or exceed customer expectations.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .084 hours per response.

Respondents: Livestock and meat industry or other for-profit businesses.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 428.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 36 hours.

Comments are invited on: (1) 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) 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; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other

technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Marlene M. Betts, Assistant to the Chief, Meat Grading and Certification Branch, Livestock and Seed Program, AMS, USDA, STOP 0248, Room 2628-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0248. All comments received will be available for public inspection during regular business hours at the same address.

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: August 4, 1999.

Robert L. Leverette,

Acting Deputy Administrator, Livestock and Seed Program.

[FR Doc. 99-20876 Filed 8-11-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-020-2]

Fruit Fly Cooperative Control Program; Draft Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has prepared a draft environmental impact statement for the Fruit Fly Cooperative Control Program. This document analyzes potential environmental effects of cooperative efforts to control exotic fruit fly pests in the United States. We are requesting public comments on the draft environmental impact statement, and notifying the public of the comment period and public meetings for the draft environmental impact statement.

DATES: We invite you to comment on the draft environmental impact statement. We will consider all comments that we receive by October 12, 1999. The public meetings will be held in (1) Washington, DC, on August 16, 1999; (2) Tampa, FL, on August 18, 1999; (3) Miami, FL, on August 20, 1999; (4) Brownsville, TX, on August 23, 1999; and (5) Los Angeles, CA, on August 25, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Please send your comment and three copies to: Mr. Harold T. Smith, Environmental Protection Officer, Environmental Analysis and Documentation, PPD, APHIS, 4700 River Road, Unit 149, Riverdale, MD 20737-1228.

Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 98-020-2.

You may read any comments that we receive on the draft environmental impact statement in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

Copies of the draft environmental impact statement are available for review between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays at the following locations:

APHIS Reading Room, room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC;
USDA, APHIS Library, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD;
USDA, APHIS, PPQ, 9580 Micron Avenue, Suite I, Sacramento, CA 95827;
USDA, APHIS, PPQ, 3505 Boca Chica Boulevard, Suite 360, Brownsville, TX 78521-4065;
USDA, APHIS, PPQ, 3505 25th Avenue, Building 1 North, Gulfport, MS 39501; and
USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Blason II, 1st Floor, 505 South Lenola Road, Moorestown, NJ 08057.

Interested persons may obtain a copy of the draft environmental impact statement by writing to any of the last four addresses listed above (those beginning with USDA, APHIS, PPQ) or to the address listed below under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

The public meeting will be held at the following locations and times:

- (1) South Agriculture Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC, on August 16, 1999, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.;
- (2) Ramada Airport Inn and Conference Center, 5303 West Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, FL, on August 18, 1999, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.;
- (3) Doubletree Grand Hotel, 1717 North Bayshore, Miami, FL, on August 20, 1999, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.;
- (4) Holiday Inn Fort Brown, 1900 East Elizabeth Street, Brownsville, TX, on August 23, 1999, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; and
- (5) Embassy Suites Los Angeles/Downey, 8425 Firestone Boulevard, Downey, CA, on August 25, 1999, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Harold T. Smith, Environmental Protection Officer, Environmental Analysis and Documentation, PPD, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 149, Riverdale, MD 20737-1228; (301) 734-8565.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Many fruit fly species are serious pests of agriculture throughout the World and represent a threat to the agriculture and ecology of the United States. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), in cooperation with other Federal and State organizations, is proposing a national program, a broad strategy, to respond to that threat. The national program includes what formerly were separate cooperative programs to control various fruit fly pest species.

APHIS, with the assistance of its cooperators, has developed a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) that analyzes a range of program alternatives and their associated components, including exclusion, detection and prevention, and control. The EIS focuses principally on the potential environmental effects of the control measures, but maintains a secondary focus on the identification of strategies for the reduction of risk in fruit fly programs.

We published a notice of intent to prepare an EIS in the **Federal Register** on March 20, 1998 (63 FR 13614-13615, Docket No. 98-020-1). The notice of intent requested comments from the public concerning issues that should be addressed in the EIS. Comments from the public during the formal scoping period were considered by APHIS for the development of the draft.

Major Issues

The comments received from the public helped us to determine the principal focus and issues of the draft EIS. The document analyzes the following broad alternatives: (1) No action, (2) a nonchemical program, and (3) an integrated program. The draft focuses principally on the potential environmental effects of control components (especially chemicals) but also focuses on the identification of strategies to reduce risk in fruit fly programs.

The draft EIS is now available for review and comment. We are seeking input from the public, including private citizens, organizations, industry, and other government agencies.