

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Agricultural Marketing Service****[Doc. No. CN-03-004]****Request for an Extension and Revision to a Currently Approved 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) intention to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget, for an extension and revision to the currently approved information collection Cotton Classing, Testing, and Standards.

DATES: Comments received by October 14, 2003, will be considered.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this notice to John Stevens, Management Analyst, Cotton Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA, STOP 0224. Comments should be submitted in triplicate. Comments may also be submitted electronically to cottoncomments@usda.gov. All comments should reference the docket number and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**. All comments received will be made available for public inspection at Cotton Program, AMS, USDA, Room 2641-S, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250 during regular business hours. A copy of this notice may be found at www.ams.usda.gov/cotton/rulemaking.htm.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Stevens, Management Analyst, Cotton Program, AMS, USDA, STOP 0224, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-0224, telephone (202) 720-3193, facsimile (202) 690-1718, or e-mail at johnc.stevens@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Cotton Classing, Testing, and Standards.

OMB Number: 0581-0008.

Expiration Date of Approval: May 31, 2004.

Type of Request: Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection.

Abstract: Information solicited is used by the USDA to administer and supervise activities associated with the classification or grading of cotton,

cotton linters, and cottonseed based on official USDA Standards. The information requires personal data, such as name, type of business, address, and description of classification services requested. These programs are conducted under the United States Cotton Standards Act (7 U.S.C. 51b), the Cotton Statistics and Estimates Act of 1927 (U.S.C. 473c), and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1622h).

The information collection requirements in this request are essential to carry out the intent of the Acts and to provide the cotton industry the type of information they need to make sound business decisions. The information collected is the minimum required. Information is requested from growers, cooperatives, merchants, manufacturers, and other government agencies.

The information collected is used only by authorized employees of the USDA, AMS. The Cotton Industry is the primary user of the compiled information and AMS and other government agencies are secondary users.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.08 hours per response.

Respondents: Cotton merchants, warehouses, and gins.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 394.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 3.54.

Estimated Number of Responses: 1,394.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 109.

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 John Stevens, Management Analyst, Cotton Programs, AMS, USDA 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 0224, Room 2641-S, Washington, DC 20250. 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 8, 2003.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 03-20694 Filed 8-13-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service****[Docket No. 03-022-2]****Availability of a Draft Pest Risk Analysis for the Importation of Hass Avocados from Mexico****AGENCY:** Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.**ACTION:** Notice of extension of comment period.

SUMMARY: We are extending the comment period for a draft pest risk analysis prepared by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service relative to a proposed rule currently under consideration that would allow the importation of Hass avocados from Mexico into the entire United States and during all months of the year. This action will allow interested persons additional time to prepare and submit comments.

DATES: We will consider all comments on the draft pest risk analysis that we receive on or before September 15, 2003.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 03-022-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 03-022-1. If you use e-mail, address your comment to regulations@aphis.usda.gov. Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and "Docket No. 03-022-1" on the subject line.

You may read any comments that we receive on the draft pest risk analysis 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.

APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register**, and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Ron A. Sequeira, Center for Plant Health Organizations and Technology, PPQ, APHIS, 1017 Main Campus Drive, Suite 2500, Raleigh, NC 27606-5202; (919) 513-2663.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On June 16, 2003, we published in the **Federal Register** (68 FR 35619, Docket No. 03-022-1) a notice advising the public that a draft pest risk analysis has been prepared by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service relative to a proposed rule currently under consideration that would allow the importation of Hass avocados from Mexico into the entire United States and during all months of the year. In that notice, we stated that we were making the draft pest risk analysis available to the public for review and comment.

Comments on the draft pest risk analysis were required to be received on or before August 15, 2003. We are extending the comment period until September 15, 2003. This action will allow interested persons additional time to prepare and submit comments.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 450 and 7701-7772; 21 U.S.C. 136 and 136a; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

Done in Washington, DC, this 11th day of August 2003.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 03-20732 Filed 8-13-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Iron Ecosystem Restoration Project, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests, Kittitas County, Washington State

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The USDA Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to reduce the risk of wildfire in the Iron Ecosystem planning area due to the buildup of both aerial and ground fuels. Approximately 12,000 acres will be analyzed with treatment expected on 3,000 to 3,500 acres within the Swauk Late Successional Reserve (LSR). Much of the area is in Condition Class III and IV fuels types, which are greater than three to four times the natural range of fire occurrence in the area. The possibility of catastrophic wildfire exists through ignitions caused both by natural sources and increased traffic on U.S. Route 97 and forest roads.

The Forest Service proposes to thin these stands from below to restore forest health and resistance to stand replacing wildfire, and to better protect late successional refugia. Protection of refugia would be achieved by breaking up contiguous, heavy fuel loading across the Swauk landscape, focusing on dry sites and sites at risk above the point of historical fire starts. Techniques such as thinning from below (pre-commercial and commercial), mechanical treatments, under burning, piling, top yarding, mulching, and fuel wood sales are proposed as tools reduce heavy fuel loading. Re-introduction of prescribed fire after initial treatments are completed is also proposed. The planning area is located approximately 15 miles northeast of Cle Elum, Washington. The agency has given notice of the full environmental analysis and decision-making process that will occur on the proposal so that interested and affected people may become aware of how they can participate in the process and contribute to the final decision.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by September 30, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to the Cle Elum Ranger District, Attn: Floyd Rogalski, Natural Resource Planner, 803 West Second Street, Cle Elum, Washington 98922.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Floyd Rogalski, Natural Resource Planner Cle-Elum Ranger District, 803 West Second Street, Cle Elum, Washington 98922, (509) 674-4411.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This environmental impact statement (EIS) will analyze an areas for possible treatments designed to improve forest health while providing forest structure for wildlife habitat, such as the Northern Spotted Owl, and protecting other resource values. Risk of Wildfire has increased in the planning area due to the buildup of both aerial and ground

fuels, exclusion of fire, and past harvest activities. These past treatment have reduced the presence of health, vigorous growing trees, while increasing the risk of stand replacement fire within an LSR. The possibility of wildfire ignition exists with increased recreational use and vehicle traffic on U.S. Highway 97 and lateral roads.

Purpose and Need for Action. Past timber harvest treatments removed many of the early seral species, leaving more shade tolerant species such as grand and Douglas-fir. Root diseases are widespread within the planning area with grand fir being the most prone and currently showing high mortality as a result. Douglas-fir mistletoe is also widespread within this area, affecting the vigor of the stands and making them more susceptible to insect attacks. Past harvest treatments also removed a majority of the dominant overstory trees, changing stocking and distribution levels, thus increasing the probability of stand replacement fire.

The primary purpose of the Iron Ecosystem Restoration Project is to implement the National Fire Plan, (January 2002) and Healthy Forest Initiative (August 2002) in the planning area. Protection of values at risk within the Swauk LSR is ultimately of the highest importance. Values at risk in the planning area include habitat for threatened and endangered species, late-successional habitat, wildland urban interface, aquatic habitat values, water quality, science values, and long-term forest stability and forest health. A strategic landscape plan would be developed and implemented for silviculturally treating heavily stocked stands for long-term stability and growth of fire resistant overstory trees, for protection of the highest quality spotted owl habitat from stand replacement fire, and for protection of current and planned home sites on private land in the Wildland Urban interface.

Proposed Action. The proposed action is to treat stands within the project area to reduce potential fire spread in the event of an ignition and to improve forest health, while continuing to provide forest structure for wildlife habitat and other resources. The Forest Service would focus treatment on those stands with greater tree densities and higher fuel loadings, considering their location on the landscape in terms of aspect and slope, and the projected benefits of manipulation in these stands to enhance suppression efforts. There have been 95 units identified that involve stands that contain a variety of mixed conifer and dry-site pine forest.