

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 70, No. 116

Friday, June 17, 2005

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

Office of the Secretary

Request for Public Comments To Be Used in Developing USDA Recommendations for the 2007 Farm Bill

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meetings and request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a series of public forums that senior officials of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will hold to obtain public input for the development of the 2007 Farm Bill. The 2002 Farm Bill, officially entitled the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the 2002 Act; Publ. L. 107-171), authorizes many of the programs operated by USDA such as the farm price and income support programs and expires with the 2007 crop year. Many other key programs specified in the 2002 Act expire at the end of fiscal year 2007. New legislation will need to be enacted prior to the expiration of the 2002 Act.

USDA intends to develop recommendations for the new farm bill and believes that public input is essential to the process by which these recommendations will be developed. This process requires an assessment of the performance of current programs operated under the 2002 Act as well as of possible alternative programs for the next farm bill.

The public forums will be held at various locations in the United States during 2005. The dates, locations, and times of the forums will be announced by USDA press release (available at <http://www.usda.gov>). The public will be invited to attend the forums and to present oral comments.

The primary topics addressed at the forums will reflect various concerns affecting rural America such as commodity, conservation, and rural

economic development issues. However, some forums will be dedicated to other important programs authorized by the farm bill such as food assistance, research, and education programs. Topics for these discussions will be announced via USDA press release.

In addition, this notice provides the public the opportunity to comment in writing on key issues that USDA expects to address in the development of its recommendations. USDA will review the public comments received, including any analyses, reports, studies, and other material submitted with the comments, that address the questions specified below.

DATES: Comments must be received by December 30, 2005.

ADDRESSES: We invite interested persons to submit comments on this notice. Comments will be accepted at public forums and may also be submitted electronically (preferred) or by postal mail. Comments may be submitted electronically via the Internet at the USDA home page (<http://www.usda.gov>) by selected "Farm Bill Forums." Comments may also be submitted by any of the following methods:

- E-mail: Send comments to: FarmBill@usda.gov
- Mail: Send comments to: Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns, Farm Bill, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3355.
- Hand delivery or courier: Deliver comments to Room 116A at the above address.

All comments, including names and addresses, provided by respondents are a matter of public record. Comments may be inspected at the Department of Agriculture. To arrange for inspection, please contact the Office of the Executive Secretariat, Room 116A, Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3355.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: By mail: USDA/OES, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3355. By telephone: USDA's Office of Communications at (202) 720-9002. By e-mail: FarmBill@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Key Issues for Comment

USDA is seeking public comments on the following farm policy considerations:

1. The competitiveness of U.S. agriculture in global and domestic markets.

As bilateral, regional, and multilateral trade negotiations continue to result in reduced barriers to international trade, exports and imports of agricultural products are expected to become increasingly important factors in U.S. and global agriculture. Obtaining ever-greater access to growing foreign markets and being increasingly competitive in these and in domestic markets is essential for farm economic growth. One key factor in our ability to be competitive depends on the types of products demanded around the world in the next 10 to 20 years and our ability to produce products that meet this world demand.

How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness and our country's ability to compete effectively in global markets?

2. The challenges facing new farmers and ranchers as they enter agriculture.

Some observers note that while farm policy has served agriculture and the country well in the past there are "unintended consequences" that should be addressed, such as the capitalization of program benefits into land prices. These higher land prices are cited as a barrier to entry into agriculture for new farmers; a factor in reduced profit for existing farmers; and a cause of weakened competitive position on the part of U.S. farmers compared with farmers in countries with lower-priced land.

How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?

3. The appropriateness and effectiveness of the distribution of farm program benefits.

A longstanding goal of farm policy has been to enhance and stabilize farm prices and incomes. Current farm programs, including crop insurance, distribute assistance based on past and current production levels. Some argue that the current farm support system encourages increases in farm size and results in the disproportionate

distribution of program benefits to large farms. It has also been suggested that program incentives lead to increased production and lower market prices.

How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?

4. The achievement of conservation and environmental goals.

While producing food and fiber are essential functions, agriculture also plays a major role in natural resource stewardship. Some have suggested that future farm policy might be anchored around the provision of tangible benefits such as cleaner water and air. Such an approach may be consistent with future World Trade Organization obligations on domestic support to agriculture, while also expanding farm programs to extend more broadly across agriculture, including private forest lands.

How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?

5. The enhancement of rural economic growth.

Farming and rural America once were almost synonymous. Over the years, the demographic and economic characteristics of rural areas have changed, as has farming's role in the rural economy. This raises the issue of whether more Government attention should be focused on investing in the infrastructure in rural America (for example, investing in new technologies).

How can Federal rural and farm programs provide effective assistance in rural areas?

6. Opportunities to expand agricultural products, markets, and research.

Changes in farm and market structure over past decades have led to suggestions that farm policy could be more flexible by enabling greater support for a broader range of activities helpful to agriculture market expansion. Examples are: Attention to product quality and new attributes; organic and specialty crops; value-added products, including renewable energy and bioproducts and new uses for farm products generally; expanded basic and applied research; domestic and foreign market development; and similar activities.

How should these agricultural product, marketing, and research-related issues be addressed in the next farm bill?

This notice is being issued to obtain public comment regarding the next farm bill. There are no regulatory findings associated with this notice.

Signed in Washington, DC, on June 8, 2005.

Mike Johanns,

Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

[FR Doc. 05-11787 Filed 6-16-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-01-M

COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED

Procurement List; Additions and Deletions

AGENCY: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

ACTION: Additions to and deletions from Procurement List.

SUMMARY: This action adds to the Procurement List a product and services to be furnished by nonprofit agencies employing persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities, and deletes from the Procurement List products previously furnished by such agencies.

DATES: *Effective Date:* July 17, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, Jefferson Plaza 2, Suite 10800, 1421 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22202-3259.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT COMMENTS CONTACT: Sheryl D. Kennerly, Telephone: (703) 603-7740, Fax: (703) 603-0655, or e-mail SKennerly@jwod.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Additions

On April 1 and April 22, 2005, the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled published notices (70 FR 16797 and 20859) of proposed additions to the Procurement List.

After consideration of the material presented to it concerning capability of qualified nonprofit agencies to provide the product and services and impact of the additions on the current or most recent contractors, the Committee has determined that the product and services listed below are suitable for procurement by the Federal Government under 41 U.S.C. 46-48c and 41 CFR 51-2.4.

Regulatory Flexibility Act Certification

I certify that the following action will not have a significant impact on a substantial number of small entities. The major factors considered for this certification were:

1. The action will not result in any additional reporting, recordkeeping or

other compliance requirements for small entities other than the small organizations that will furnish the product and services to the Government.

2. The action will result in authorizing small entities to furnish the product and services to the Government.

3. There are no known regulatory alternatives which would accomplish the objectives of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (41 U.S.C. 46-48c) in connection with the product and services proposed for addition to the Procurement List.

End of Certification

Accordingly, the following product and services are added to the Procurement List:

Product

Bottle, Oil Sample.

NSN: 8125-01-193-3440—Bottle, Oil Sample.

NPA: East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind, Tyler, TX.

Contracting Activity: Defense Supply Center Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

Services

Service Type/Location: Custodial Services, Postwide, Fort Knox, KY.

NPA: Lakeview Center, Inc., Pensacola, FL.
Contracting Activity: Directorate of Contracting, Fort Knox, KY.

Service Type/Location: Custodial Services, West Point Elementary School, West Point Academy, West Point, NY.

NPA: Occupations, Inc., Middletown, NY.
Contracting Activity: Directorate of Contracting, West Point, NY.

Service Type/Location: Food Service Attendant, U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office/Group Portland, 6767 North Basin Avenue, Portland, OR.

NPA: DePaul Industries, Portland, OR.
Contracting Activity: U.S. Coast Guard-Alameda, Alameda, CA.

Deletions

On April 22, 2005, the Committee for Purchase From People Who are Blind or Severely Disabled published notice (70 FR 20858) of proposed deletions to the Procurement List.

After consideration of the relevant matter presented, the Committee has determined that the products listed below are no longer suitable for procurement by the Federal Government under 41 U.S.C. 46-48c and 41 CFR 51-2.4.

Regulatory Flexibility Act Certification

I certify that the following action will not have a significant impact on a substantial number of small entities. The major factors considered for this certification were:

1. The action may result in additional reporting, recordkeeping or other