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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket No. AMS-FV-15-0069; FV16-981-1]

#### Notice of Request for Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection

**AGENCY:** Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comment.

**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 an extension for and revision of a currently approved information collection for Almonds Grown in California, Marketing Order No. 981.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by May 17, 2016.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this notice. Comments must be sent to the Docket Clerk, Marketing Order and Agreement Division, Specialty Crops Program, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., STOP 0237, Washington, DC 20250-0237; Fax: (202) 720-8938; or Internet:

[www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Comments should reference the docket number and the date and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register** and will be available for public inspection in the Office of the Docket Clerk during regular business hours, or can be viewed at: [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). All comments submitted in response to this notice will be included in the record and will be made available to the public. Please be advised that the identity of the individuals or entities submitting the comments will be made available to the public on the internet at the address provided above.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Andrew Hatch, Marketing Order and Agreement Division, Specialty Crops Program, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., STOP 0237, Room 1406-S, Washington, DC 20250-0237; Telephone: (202) 720-6862, Fax: (202) 720-8938, or Email: [andrew.hatch@ams.usda.gov](mailto:andrew.hatch@ams.usda.gov).

Small businesses may request information on this notice by contacting Antoinette Carter, Technical Assistant to the Director, Marketing Order and Agreement Division, Specialty Crops Program, AMS, USDA, 1400

Independence Avenue SW., STOP 0237, Room 1406-S, Washington, DC 20250-0237; Telephone (202) 690-3919, Fax: (202) 720-8938; or Email: [antoinette.carter@ams.usda.gov](mailto:antoinette.carter@ams.usda.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Title:* Almonds Grown in California, Marketing Order No. 981.

*OMB Number:* 0581-0242.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* June 30, 2016.

*Type of Request:* Extension and revision of a currently approved information collection.

*Abstract:* The information collection requirements in this request are essential to carry out the intent of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (Act), as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), to provide the respondents the type of service they request, and to administer the California almond marketing order (7 CFR part 981), which has been operating since 1950.

The marketing order and its rules and regulations authorize the Almond Board of California (Board), the agency responsible for local administration of the marketing order, to require handlers and other certain entities to submit information.

In September 2007, a mandatory program was implemented under the marketing order to help reduce the potential for Salmonella in almonds. The Board has developed forms as a means for persons to file required information with the Board relating to the treatment of almonds to reduce the potential for Salmonella. Almond handlers are required to submit annual treatment plans to the Board and inspection agency regarding how they plan to treat their almonds to reduce the potential for Salmonella. Entities interested in being almond process authorities that validate technologies are

required to submit an application to the Board on ABC Form No. 51, "Application for Process Authority for Almonds." Manufacturers in the United States, Canada, and Mexico interested in being approved to accept untreated almonds, provided they agree to treat the almonds themselves under the Board's Direct Verifiable (DV) program are required to submit an application to the Board on ABC Form No. 52, "Application for Direct Verifiable (DV) Program for Further Processing of Untreated Almonds." Entities interested in being approved DV user auditors are required to submit an application to the Board on ABC Form No. 53, "Application for Direct Verifiable (DV) Program Auditors." To ensure compliance with the mandatory program, entities are required to use either an on-site or audit-based verification program and annually submit a treatment plan to the Board on ABC Form No. 54, "Handler Treatment Plan."

The information collected is used only by authorized representatives of USDA, including AMS, Specialty Crops Program's regional and headquarters' staff, and authorized employees and agents of the Board. Authorized Board employees, agents, and the industry are the primary users of the information, and AMS is the secondary user.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response.

*Respondents:* Almond handlers; persons or organizations that would like to qualify to be Board-approved process authorities that validate treatments and technologies; manufacturers who would like to qualify to participate in the Board's DV program; and entities that would like to qualify as auditors under the DV program.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 175.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* 1.00.

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

*Comments are invited on:* (1) Whether this collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information has practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information including the validity of

the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

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: March 15, 2016.

**Elanor Starmer,**

*Acting Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.*

[FR Doc. 2016-06144 Filed 3-17-16; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Food and Nutrition Service

#### Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request—Understanding the Anti-Fraud Measures of Large SNAP Retailers

**AGENCY:** Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on this proposed information collection. This is a new collection for the purpose of learning about the types of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) related fraud activity observed by large retailers and the methods they use to prevent fraud and minimize their losses. The goal of the information collection is to learn more about the types of SNAP fraud that occur in large retailer settings; document retailer practices to detect, deter, and deal with fraud (collectively known as loss prevention or loss prevention practices); and determine which practices could provide information that would help FNS in detecting and preventing SNAP fraud.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received by May 17, 2016.

**ADDRESSES:** 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 shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the time and cost burden for this

proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the reporting burden on those who are asked 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 Eric Sean Williams, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22312. Comments may also be submitted via fax to the attention of Eric Sean Williams at (703) 305-2576 or via email to [Eric.Williams@fns.usda.gov](mailto:Eric.Williams@fns.usda.gov).

Comments will also be accepted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and follow the online instructions for submitting comments electronically.

All written comments will be open for public inspection at the office of FNS during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday) located at 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, Virginia 22312.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will be a matter of public record.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Requests for additional information or copies of this information collected should be directed to Eric Sean Williams, Office of Policy Support, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Title:* Understanding the Anti-Fraud Measures of Large SNAP Retailers.

*OMB Number:* 0584—NEW.

*Expiration Date:* Not Yet Determined.

*Abstract:* FNS is responsible for authorizing retailers for participation in SNAP as well as monitoring their compliance with applicable regulations. Fraud in the context of SNAP can come from client-level program violations or retailer-level fraud. The latter, which is the focus of this study, can involve different actions such as the buying and selling of benefits or selling ineligible items like alcohol and tobacco. FNS believes that any type of fraud in SNAP weakens the program by diverting benefits from the intended purpose of helping low-income Americans purchase food and undermining the public confidence in the program. Thus, the Agency continually seeks new ways to detect and prevent fraud.

Research has consistently demonstrated that fraud rates are lowest

among large retailers. There are several theories for why this may be true, one of which is that large regional or national retail chains of stores have sophisticated loss prevention systems that prevent or detect numerous types of fraud. Thus, a loss prevention system built to discover an employee engaging in credit card fraud could easily be modified to detect an employee engaging in SNAP benefit fraud. Similarly, a system built to prevent internal theft may be able to detect the sale of ineligible items.

Despite theories as to why large stores have low SNAP fraud rates, there is limited understanding of how they prevent SNAP fraud. If internal loss prevention systems prevent SNAP fraud, then it is possible that a better understanding of large store procedures could help FNS refine its procedures for detecting and reducing retailer-level fraud. Thus, FNS desires to understand more about the steps large retailers take to protect themselves from fraud in general and SNAP fraud specifically.

The information collection activities to be undertaken subject to this notice include: Survey of Companies that own/franchise large SNAP authorized retail chains: Surveys will be administered to company SNAP representatives in companies that own, franchise and/or have cooperative agreements with the largest chains of SNAP-authorized stores. These include super store chains, large supermarket chains, convenience store chains, and other chain stores that sell a combination of food and other products, such as household products, pharmaceuticals, or gasoline. The surveys will address the loss prevention systems used by these companies.

Survey of SNAP Authorized Stores owned/franchised/affiliated with large retail chains: Surveys will be administered to managers of super stores, large supermarkets, convenience stores and other chain stores that sell a combination of food and other products. The surveys will address fraud detection and prevention policies and practices.

This study does not seek to represent all SNAP retailers. It targets the practices of one segment of the SNAP authorized retailer population—the largest retail chains. These chains are likely to have the most sophisticated loss prevention systems. Therefore, the study includes the large national and regional chain retailers responsible for transacting about half of all SNAP redemptions. A total of the 35 largest retail corporations and a sample of 2,000 of their store outlets are expected to respond to surveys.