

We are asking the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve this information collection activity for 3 years.

The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public (as well as affected agencies) concerning our information collection. These comments will help us:

(1) Evaluate whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(2) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the burden of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, through use, as appropriate, of automated, electronic, mechanical, and other collection technologies; e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

Estimate of burden: The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.083 hours per response.

Respondents: Members of the public who receive services from VS area offices and import/export facilities.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 5,000.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 1.

Estimated annual number of responses: 5,000.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 415 hours. (Due to averaging, the total annual burden hours may not equal the product of the annual number of responses multiplied by the reporting burden per response.)

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.

Done in Washington, DC, this 12th day of June 2006.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. E6-9469 Filed 6-15-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Federal Crop Insurance Corporation

Funding Opportunity; Commodity Partnerships for Risk Management Education (Commodity Partnership Program)

Announcement Type: Availability of Funds and Request for Application for Competitive Cooperative Partnership Agreements—Initial.

CFDA Number: 10.457.

Dates: Application are due 5 p.m. EDT, July 17, 2006.

Executive Summary

The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), operating through the Risk Management Agency (RMA), announces the availability of approximately \$500,000 for Commodity Partnerships for Risk Management Education (the Commodity Partnerships program). Since the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 authorized the use of partnerships to provide risk management education, RMA has annually offered partnerships to provide education to producers of crops currently no insured under Federal crop insurance, specialty crops, and underserved commodities, including livestock and forage (priority commodities). Even though these partnerships have been very successful, there is a segment of producers that have not been reached with these education programs—refugees and low income individuals who produce, or who are undertaking to establish a business producing, priority commodities (target producers). The purpose of this cooperative partnership agreement program is to deliver risk management training and information to these producers. A maximum of ten partnership agreements will be funded. The maximum award for any of the ten cooperative partnership agreements will be \$50,000. Recipients of awards must demonstrate non-financial benefits from a cooperative partnership agreement and must agree to the substantial involvement of RMA in the project.

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Legislative Authority

The Commodity Partnerships program is authorized under section 552(d)(3)(F) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (Act) (7 U.S.C. 1522(d)(3)(F)).

B. Background

RMA promotes and regulates sound risk management solutions to improve the economic stability of American agriculture. On behalf of FCIC, RMA does this by offering Federal crop insurance products through a network of private-sector partners, overseeing the creation of new risk management products, seeking enhancements in

existing products, ensuring the integrity of crop insurance programs, offering outreach programs aimed at equal access and participation of underserved communities, and providing risk management education and information.

Since the inception of the partnership program in 2000, RMA has offered millions of dollars in partnerships and has provided risk management tools and education to a large variety of producers of priority commodities. However, through all the partnerships that have been awarded over the years few if any have been directed at the target producers. The need for outreach to this segment of the population has been recognized by both the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), who executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on December 16, 2004, for the purpose of coordinating policies and activities designed to improve the economic conditions of target producers engaged in farming and rural entrepreneurship.

Assessments of the needs of target producers have identified these issues and needs; (1) Improving access to and utilization of conventional marketing and distribution channels by increasing understanding of packer contracts, quality standards, price fluctuations, and crop financing; (2) Establishing niche markets, including specialty branding, organic certification, and increased access to Farmers Markets; (3) Improving access to land, equipment and financing and educating producers about lease agreements and financing options; (4) Need for technical assistance and training, particularly in chemical use, recordkeeping, and season extension; (5) Uneven support and involvement of government and community based agencies such as county agricultural commissioners, and extension services, faith based groups, and civic organizations; (6) Language and culture: both the need for service providers to understand the language and culture of the refugees, and the need for the refugees to learn the language and culture of America, and particularly the methods of accessing government and community based services. Therefore, RMA is looking for proposals to address these issues and needs for target producers.

C. Definition of Priority Commodities

For purposes of this program, priority commodities are defined as:

- *Agricultural commodities covered by (7 U.S.C. 7333).* Commodities in this group are commercial crops that are not covered by catastrophic risk protection crop insurance, are used for food or

fiber (except livestock), and specifically include, but are not limited to, floricultural, ornamental nursery, Christmas trees, turf grass sod, aquaculture (including ornamental fish), and industrial crops.

- *Specialty crops.* Commodities in this group may or may not be covered under a Federal crop insurance plan and include, but are not limited to, fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, syrups, honey, roots, herbs, and highly specialized varieties of traditional crops.

- *Underserved commodities.* This group includes: (a) Commodities, including livestock and forage, that are covered by a Federal crop insurance plan but for which participation in an area is below the national average; and (b) commodities, including livestock and forage, with inadequate crop insurance coverage.

A project is considered as giving priority to priority commodities if the majority of the educational activities of the project are directed to producers of any of the three classes of commodities listed above or any combination of the three classes.

D. Definition of Target Audience

This program is directed at those refugees and other low income individuals who produce, or who are undertaking to establish a business producing, priority commodities (target producers). For purposes of this program, target producers are defined as:

- *Refugee.* As established by DHHS, includes refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, certain Americans from Vietnam (including some citizens), and victims of a severe form of trafficking. An individual that has fled another country and has come to the United States for refuge, especially from invasion, oppression, or persecution. Although some of these individuals become eligible for legal permanent residence one year after their arrival in the U.S., they continue to meet the definition of "refugee" for purpose of social service benefits until they become U.S. citizens.

- *Low Income Individuals.* Persons whose family incomes are at or below 200 percent of the poverty guidelines established by DHHS.

E. Project Goal

The goal of this program is to ensure that target producers will be better able to use financial management, crop insurance, marketing contracts, and other existing and emerging risk management tools.

F. Purpose

The purpose of the Commodity Partnership program is to provide U.S. farmers and ranchers with training and informational opportunities to be able to understand:

- The kinds of risks addressed by existing and emerging risk management tools;
- The features and appropriate use of existing and emerging risk management tools; and
- How to make sound risk management decisions.

II. Award information

A. Type of Award: Cooperative Partnership Agreements, which require the substantial involvement of RMA.

B. Funding Availability:

Approximately \$500,000 is available in fiscal year 2006 to fund up to ten cooperative partnership agreements. The maximum award will be \$50,000. Applicants should apply for funding under that RMA Region where the educational activities will be directed.

In the event that the Manager of FCIC determines that available RMA resources cannot support the administrative and substantial involvement requirements of all agreements recommended for funding, the Manager may elect to fund fewer agreements than the available funding might otherwise allow. It is expected that the awards will be made approximately 30 days after the application deadline. All awards will be made and agreements finalized no later than September 30, 2006.

C. Location and Target Audience:

RMA Regional Office and the States serviced within each Region are listed below. Staff from the respective RMA Regional Offices will provide substantial involvement for projects conducted within their Region.

Billings, MT Regional Office: (MT, WY, ND, and SD).

Davis, CA Regional Office: (CA, NV, UT, AZ, and HI).

Jackson, MS Regional Office: (KY, TN, AR, LA, and MS).

Oklahoma City, OK Regional Office: (OK, TX, and NM).

Raleigh, NC Regional Office: (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, MD, DE, WV, VA, and NC).

Spokane, WA Regional Office: (WA, ID, OR, and AK).

Springfield, IL Regional Office: (IL, IN, OH, and MI).

St. Paul, MN Regional Office: (MN, WI, and IA).

Topeka, KS Regional Office: (KS, MO, NE, and CO).

Valdosta, GA Regional Office: (AL, GA, SC, FL, and Puerto Rico).

Applicants must designate in their application narratives the RMA Region where educational activities will be conducted and the specific groups of target producers within the region that the applicant intends to reach through the project. Priority will be given to producers of priority commodities. Applicants proposing to conduct educational activities in more than one RMA Region must submit a separate application for each RMA Region.

This requirements is not intended to preclude target producers from areas that border a designated RMA Region from participating in that region's educational activities. It is also not intended to prevent applicants from proposing the use of certain informational methods, such as print or broadcast news outlets, that may reach and target producers engaged in farming and ranching in other RMA Regions.

D. Maximum Award: Any application that requests Federal funding of more than \$50,000 for a project in any of the individual RMA Regions will be rejected.

E. Project Period: Projects will be funded for a period of up to one year from the project starting date.

F. Description of Agreement Award: Recipients Tasks

In conducting activities to achieve the purpose and goal of this program in a designated RMA Region, the award recipient will be responsible for performing the following tasks:

- Develop and conduct a promotional program. This program will include activities using appropriate informational dissemination techniques that are designed to: (a) Raise awareness for the availability of the risk management education program; (b) inform target producers of the availability of risk management tools; and (c) inform target producers and agribusiness leaders in the designated RMA Region of information and training opportunities provided by the USDA and DHHS.

- Deliver, using culturally appropriate methods, risk management training and informational opportunities to target producers in the designated RMA Region. This will include organizing and delivering educational activities using instructional materials developed for target producers. Activities should be directed primarily to target producers, but may include those agribusiness professionals that have frequent opportunities to advise target producers on risk management tools and decisions.

- Document all educational activities conducted under the partnership agreement and the results of such

activities, including criteria and indicators used to evaluate the success of the program. The recipient may also be required to provide information to an RMA-selected contractor to evaluate all educational activities and advise RMA as to the effectiveness of activities.

G. RMA Activities: FCIS, working through RMA, will be substantially involved during the performance of the funded project through RMA's ten Regional Offices. Potential types of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to the following activities.

- Assist in the selection of subcontractors and project staff.
- Collaborate with the recipient in assembling, reviewing, and approving risk management materials for target producers in the designated RMA Region.
- Collaborate with the recipient in reviewing and approving a promotional program for raising awareness for risk management and for informing target producers of training and informational opportunities in the RMA Region.
- Collaborate with the recipient on the delivery of education to target producers and agribusiness leaders in the RMA Region. This will include: (a) Reviewing and approving in advance all producer and agribusiness leader educational activities; (b) advising the project leader on technical issues related to crop insurance education and information; (c) assisting the project leader in informing crop insurance professionals about educational activity plans and scheduled meetings and; (d) networking with other agencies/services within USDA and the DHHS.

- Conduct an evaluation of the performance of the recipient in meeting the deliverables of the project.

Applications that do not contain substantial involvement by RMA will be rejected.

H. Other Tasks: In addition to the specific, required tasks listed above, the applicant may propose additional tasks that would contribute directly to the purpose of this program. For any proposed additional task, the applicant must identify the objective of the task, the specific subtasks required to meet the objective, specific time lines for performing the subtasks, and the specific responsibilities of partners. The applicant must also identify specific ways in which RMA would have substantial involvement in the proposed project task.

III. Eligibility Information

a. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include State departments of agriculture, universities,

non-profit agricultural organizations, and other public or private organizations with the capacity to lead a local program of risk management education for target producers in an RMA Region. Individuals are not eligible applicants. Although an applicant may be eligible to compete for an award based on its status as an eligible entity, other factors may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal assistance under this program governed by Federal law and regulations (e.g. debarment and suspension; a determination of non-performance on a prior contract, cooperative agreement, grant or partnership; a determination of a violation of applicable ethical standards; a determination of being considered "high risk"). Applications from ineligible or excluded persons will be rejected in their entirety.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Although RMA prefers cost sharing by the applicant, this program has neither a cost sharing nor a matching requirement.

C. Other—Non-Financial Benefits

To be eligible, applicants must also be able to demonstrate that they will receive a non-financial benefit as a result of a partnership agreement. Non-financial benefits must accrue to the applicant and must include more than the ability to provide employment income to the applicant or for the applicant's employees or the community. The applicant must demonstrate that performance under the partnership agreement will further the specific mission of the applicant (such as providing research or activities necessary for graduate or other students to complete their educational program). Applicants that do not demonstrate a non-financial benefit will be rejected.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Contact to Request Application Package

Program application materials for the Commodity Partnerships program under this announcement may be downloaded from <http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/agreements>. Applicants may also request application materials from: Eric Edgington, USDA-RMA-IS, phone (202) 690-2539, fax (202) 690-2095, e-mail: Eric.Edgington@rma.usda.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

A complete and valid application package must include an electronic copy (Microsoft Word format preferred) of the narrative portion (Forms RME-1

and RME-2) of the application package on compact disc and an original and two copies of the completed and signed application must be submitted in one package at the time of initial submission, which must include the following:

1. A completed and signed OMB Standard Form 424, "Application for Federal Assistance".

2. A completed and signed OMB Standard Form 424-A, "Budget Information—Non-construction Programs". Federal funding requested (the total of direct and indirect costs) must not exceed \$50,000.

3. A completed and signed OMB Standard Form 424-B, "Assurances, Non-constructive Programs".

4. Risk Management Education Project Narrative (Form RME-1). Complete all required parts of Form RME-1:

Part I—Title Page.

Part II—A written narrative of no more than 10 single-sided pages, which will provide reviewers with sufficient information to effectively evaluate the merits of the application according to the evaluation criteria, listed in this notice. Although a Statement of Work, which is the third evaluation criterion, is to be completed in detail in RME Form-2, applicants may wish to highlight certain unique features of the Statement of Work in Part II for the benefit of the evaluation panel. If your narrative exceeds the page limit, only the first 10 pages will be reviewed.

- No smaller than 12-point font size.
- Use an easily readable font face (e.g., Arial, Geneva, Helvetica, Times Roman).
- 8.5 by 11 inch paper
- One-inch margins on each page.
- Printed on only one side of paper.
- Held together only by rubber bands or metal clips; not bound or stapled in any other way

Part III—A Budget Narrative, describing how the categorical costs listed on SF 424-A are derived.

Part IV—Provide a "Statement of Non-financial Benefits". (Refer to Section III, Eligibility Information, C. Other—Non-financial Benefits, above).

5. "Statement of Work", Form RME-2, which identifies tasks and subtasks in detail, expected completion dates and deliverables, and RMA's substantial involvement role for the proposed project.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications Deadline: July 17, 2006. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that RMA receives a complete application package by the closing date and time. Incomplete or late application packages will not receive further consideration.

D. Funding Restrictions

Cooperative partnership agreement funds may not be used to:

- a. Plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct a building or facility including a processing facility;
- b. Purchase, rent, or install fixed equipment;
- c. Repair or maintain privately owned vehicles;
- d. Pay for the preparation of the cooperative partnership agreement application;
- e. Fund political activities;
- f. Purchase alcohol, food, beverage, or entertainment;
- g. Pay costs incurred prior to receiving a partnership agreement;
- h. Fund any activities prohibited in 7 CFR parts 3015 and 3019, as applicable.

E. Limitation on Use of Project Funds for Salaries and Benefits

Total costs for salary and benefits allowed for projects under this announcement will be limited to not more than 60 percent reimbursement of the funds awarded under the cooperative partnership agreement as indicated in Section III. Eligibility Information, C. Other—Non-financial Benefits. All remaining funds must be used for the educational materials, promotion, rental of a meeting place, etc. One goal of the Commodity Partnerships program is to maximize the use of the limited funding available for risk management education for producers of Priority Commodities. In order to accomplish this goal, RMA needs to ensure that the maximum amount of funds practicable is used for directly providing the educational opportunities. Limiting the amount of funding for salaries and benefits will allow the limited amount of funding to reach the maximum number of farmers and ranchers.

F. Indirect Cost Rates

a. Indirect costs allowed for projects submitted under this announcement will be limited to ten (10) percent of the total direct cost of the cooperative partnership agreement.

b. RMA will withhold all indirect cost rate funds for an award to an applicant requesting indirect costs if the applicant has not negotiated an indirect cost rate with its cognizant Federal agency.

c. If an applicant is in the process of negotiation an indirect cost rate with its cognizant Federal agency, RMA will withhold all indirect cost rate funds from that applicant until the indirect cost rate has been established.

d. If an applicant's indirect cost rate has expired or will expire prior to award

announcements, a clear statement on renegotiation efforts must be included in the application.

e. It is incumbent on all applicants to have a current indirect cost rate or begin negotiations to establish an indirect cost rate prior to the submission deadline. Because it may take several months to obtain an indirect cost rate, applicants needing an indirect cost rate are encouraged to start work on establishing these rates well in advance of submitting an application. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is responsible for assigning cognizant Federal agencies.

f. Applicants may be asked to provide a copy of their indirect cost rate negotiated with their cognizant agency.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Mailed submissions: Applications submitted through express, overnight mail or another delivery service will be considered as meeting the announced deadline if they are received in the mailroom at the address stated below for express, overnight mail or another delivery service on or before the deadline. Applicants are cautioned that express, overnight mail or other delivery services do not always deliver as agreed. Applicants should consider this because failure of such delivery services will not extend the deadline. Mailed applications will be considered as meeting the announced deadline if they are received on or before the deadline in the mailroom at the address stated below for mailed applications.

Applicants are responsible for mailing applications well in advance, to ensure that applications are received on or before the deadline time and date. Applicants using the U.S. Postal Services should allow for the extra security handling time for delivery due to the additional security measures that mail delivered to government offices in the Washington, DC area requires.

Address when using private delivery services or when hand delivering:
Attention: Risk Management Refugee Program, USDA/RMA/IS, Room 6715, South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250.

Address when using U.S. Postal Services: Attention: Risk Management Refugee Program, USDA/RMA/IS/Stop 0805, Room 6715, South Building, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-0805.

H. Electronic Submissions

Applications transmitted electronically via Grants.gov will be accepted prior to the application date or time deadline. The application package can be accessed via Grants.gov, go to

<http://www.grants.gov>, click on "Find Grant Opportunities", click on "Search Grant Opportunities," and enter the CFDA number (located at the beginning of this RFA) to search by CFDA number. From the search results, select the item that correlates to the title of this RFA. If you do not have electronic access to the RFA or have trouble downloading material and you would like a hardcopy, you may contact Eric Edgington, USDA-RMA-IS, phone (202) 690-2539, fax (202) 690-2095, e-mail:

Eric.Edgington@rma.usda.gov.

I. Acknowledgement of Applications

Receipt of applications will be acknowledged by e-mail, whenever possible. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to provide e-mail addresses in their applications. If an e-mail address is not indicated on an application, receipt will be acknowledged by letter. There will be no notification of incomplete, unqualified, or unfunded applications until the awards have been made. When received by RMA, applications will be assigned an identification number. This number will be communicated to applicants in the acknowledgement of receipt of applications. An application's identification number should be referenced in all correspondence regarding the application. If the applicant does not receive an acknowledgement within 15 days of the submission deadline, the applicant should notify RMA's point of contact indicated in Section VII, Agency Contact.

V. Application Review Information

A. Criteria

Applications submitted under the Commodity Partnerships program will be evaluated within each RMA Region according to the following criteria:

Priority—Maximum 10 Points

The applicant can submit projects that are not related to Priority Commodities. However, priority is given to projects relating to Priority Commodities and the degree in which such projects relate to the Priority Commodities. Projects that relate solely to Priority Commodities will be eligible for the most points.

Project Benefits—Maximum 35 Points

The applicant must demonstrate that the project benefits to target producers warrant the funding requested. Projects that relate solely to target producers will be eligible for the most points. Projects for which target producers are estimated to receive less than 75 percent will be rejected. Applicants will be scored according to the extent they can: (a)

Reasonably estimate and describe the total number of target producers reached through the various educational activities described in the Statement of Work; (b) justify such estimates with clear specifics; (c) identify the actions target producers will likely be able to take as a result of the activities described in the Statement of Work; and (d) identify the specific measures for evaluating results that will be employed in the project. Reviewers' scoring will be based on the scope and reasonableness of the applicant's estimates of target producers reached through the project, clear descriptions of specific expected project benefits, and well-designed methods for measuring the project's results and effectiveness.

Statement of Work—Maximum 15 Points

The applicant must produce a clear and specific Statement of Work for the project. For each of the tasks contained in the Description of Agreement Award (refer to Section II Award Information), the applicant must identify and describe specific subtasks, responsible entities, expected completion dates, RMA substantial involvement, and deliverables that will further the purpose of this program. Applicants will obtain a higher score to the extent that the Statement of Work is specific, measurable, reasonable, has specific deadlines for the completion of subtasks, relates directly to the required activities and the program purpose described in this announcement, which is to provide producers with training and informational opportunities so that the producers will be better able to use financial management, crop insurance, marketing contracts, and other existing and emerging risk management tools. Applicants are required to submit this Statement of Work on Form RME-2.

Partnering—Maximum 20 Points

The applicant must demonstrate experience and capacity to partner with other USDA and DHHS agencies and services, grower organizations, agribusiness professionals, and agricultural leaders to carry out a local program of education and information in a designated RMA Region. Applicants will receive higher scores to the extent that they can document and demonstrate: (a) That partnership commitments are in place for the express purpose of delivering the program in this announcement; (b) that multiple groups of target producers will be reached within the RMA Region; and (c) that a substantial effort has been made to partner with organizations that can meet the needs of target producers.

Project Management—Maximum 10 Points

The applicant must demonstrate an ability to implement sound and effective project management practices. Higher scores will be awarded to applicants that can demonstrate organizational skills, leadership, and experience in delivering services or programs that assist target producers in the respective RMA Region. Applicants that will employ, or have access to, personnel who have experience in directing local educational programs that benefit target producers in the respective RMA Region will receive higher rankings.

Past Performance—Maximum 10 Points

If the applicant has been a recipient of other Federal or other government grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts, the applicant must provide information relating to their past performance in reporting on outputs and outcomes under past or current Federal assistance agreements. The applicant must also detail that they have consistently complied with financial and program reporting and auditing requirements. RMA reserves the right to add up to 10 points and subtract 5 points to applications due to past performance. Applicants with very good past performance will receive a score from 6-10 points. Applicants with acceptable past performance will receive a score from 1-5 points. Applicants with unacceptable past performance will receive a score of minus 5 points for this evaluation factor. Applicants without relevant past performance information will receive a neutral score of the mean number of points of all applicants with past performance. Under this cooperative partnership agreement, RMA will subjectively rate the recipient on project performance as indicated in Section II, G.

The applicant must list all current public or private support to which personnel identified in the application have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for persons involved is included in the budget. An application that duplicates or overlaps substantially with an application already reviewed and funded (or to be funded) by another organization or agency will not be funded under this program. The projects proposed for funding should be included in the pending section.

Budget Appropriateness and Efficiency—Maximum 15 Points

Applicants must provide a detailed budget summary that clearly explains

and justifies costs associated with the project. Applicants will receive higher scores to the extent that they can demonstrate a fair and reasonable use of funds appropriate for the project and a budget that contains the estimated cost of reaching each individual target producers. The applicant must provide information factors such as:

- The allowability and necessity for individual cost categories;
- The reasonableness of amounts estimated for necessary costs;
- The basis used for allocating indirect or overhead costs;
- The appropriateness of allocating particular overhead costs to the proposed project as direct costs; and
- The percent of time devoted to the project for all key project personnel identified in the application. Salaries of project personnel should be requested in proportion to the percent of time that they would devote to the project—Note: cannot exceed 60% of the total project budget. Applicants must list all current public or private support to which personnel identified in the application have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for persons involved is included in the budget. Only items or services that are necessary for the successful completion of the project will be funded as permitted under the Act.

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be evaluated using a two-part process. First, each application will be screened by RMA personnel to ensure that it meets the requirements in this announcement. Applications that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or are incomplete will not receive further consideration. Applications that meet announcement requirements will be sorted into the RMA Region in which the applicant proposes to conduct the project and will be presented to a review panel for consideration.

Second, the review panel will meet to consider and discuss the merits of each application. The panel will consist of not less than three independent reviewers. Reviewers will be drawn from USDA, other Federal agencies, and others representing public and private organizations, as needed. After considering the merits of all applications within an RMA Region, panel members will score each application according to the criteria and point values listed above. The panel will then rank each application against others within the RMA Region according to the scores received. A random drawing will be held to resolve any instances of a tie score that might have

a hearing on funding recommendations. If such a drawing is required, the names of all tied applicants will be entered into a drawing. The first tied applicant drawn will have priority over other tied applicants for funding consideration.

The review panel will report the results of the evaluation to the Manager of FCIC. The panel's report will include the recommended applicants to receive partnership agreements for each RMA Region. Funding will not be provided for an application receiving a score less than 60. Funding will not be provided for an application that is highly similar to a higher-scoring application in the same RMA Region. Highly similar is one that proposes to reach the same target producers likely to be reached by another applicant that scored higher by the panel and the same general educational material is proposed to be delivered.

An organization, or group of organizations in partnership, may apply for funding under other FCIC or RMA programs, in addition to the program described in this announcement. However, if the Manager of FCIC determines that an application recommended for funding is sufficiently similar to a project that has been funded or has been recommended to be funded under another RMA or RCIC program, then the Manager may elect to not fund that application in whole or in part. The Manager of FCIC will make the final determination on those applications that will be awarded funding.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Following approval by the awarding official of RMA of the applications to be selected for funding, project leaders whose applications have been selected for funding will be notified. Within the limit of funds available for such a purpose, the awarding official of RMA shall enter into partnership agreements with those selected applicants. The agreements provide the amount of Federal funds for use in the project period, the terms, and conditions of the award, and the time period for the project. The effective date of the agreement shall be on the date the agreement is executed by both parties and it shall remain in effect for up to one year or through September 30, 2007, whichever is later.

After a cooperative partnership agreement has been signed, RMA will extend to award recipients, in writing, the authority to draw down funds for conducting the activities listed in the agreement. All funds provided to the applicant by FCIC must be expended

solely for the purpose for which the funds are obligated in accordance with the approved agreement and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award and the applicability of Federal cost principles. No commitment of Federal assistance beyond the project period is made or implied for any award resulting from this notice.

Notification of denial of funding will be sent to applicants after final funding decisions have been made. Reasons for denial of funding can include, but are not limited to, incomplete applications, applications with evaluation scores that are lower than other applications in an RMA Region, or applications that propose to deliver education to target producers in an RMA Region that are largely similar to groups reached in a higher ranked application.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Requirement To Use Program Logo

Applicants awarded partnership agreements will be required to use a program logo and design provided by RMA for all instructional and promotional materials.

2. Requirement to Provide Project Information to an RMA-selected Representative

Applicants awarded partnership agreements will be required to assist RMA in evaluating the effectiveness of its educational programs by providing documentation of educational activities and related information to any representative selected by RMA for program evaluation purposes.

3. Private Crop Insurance Organizations and Potential Conflicts of Interest

Private organizations that are involved in the sale of Federal crop insurance, or that have financial ties to such organizations, are eligible to apply for funding under this announcement. However, such entries will not be allowed to receive funding to conduct activities that would otherwise be required under a Standard Reinsurance Agreement or any other agreement in effect between FCIC and the entity. Also, such entities will not be allowed to receive funding to conduct activities that could be perceived by producers as promoting one company's services or products over another's. If applying for funding, such organizations are encouraged to be sensitive to potential conflicts of interest and to describe in their application the specific actions they will take to avoid actual and perceived conflicts of interest.

4. Access to Panel Review Information

Upon written request from the applicant, scores from the evaluation panel, not including the identity of reviewers, will be sent to the applicant after the review and awards process has been completed.

5. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

The names of applicants, the names of individuals identified in the applications, the content of applications, and the panel evaluations of applications will all be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of review panel members will remain confidential throughout the entire review process and will not be released to applicants. At the end of the fiscal year, names of panel members will be made available. However, panelists will not be identified with the review of any particular application.

When an application results in a partnership agreement, that agreement becomes a part of the official record of RMA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to be considered confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within an application, including the basis for such designation. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by RMA for a period of one year. Other copies will be destroyed. Copies of applications not receiving awards will be released only with the express written consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to award.

6. Audit Requirements

Applicants awarded partnership agreements are subject to audit.

7. Prohibitions and Requirements With Regard to Lobbying

Since all awards under the request for application shall not exceed \$50,000, the reporting requirements in section 319(b) of Public Law 101-121, enacted on October 23, 1989, are not applicable.

8. Applicable OMB Circulars

All cooperative partnership agreements funded as a result of this notice will be subject to the

requirements contained in all applicable OMB circulars.

9. Requirement To Assure Compliance with Federal Civil Rights Laws

Project leaders of all cooperative partnership agreements funded as a result of this notice are required to know and abide by Federal civil rights laws and to assure USDA and RMA that the recipient is in compliance with and will continue to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et. seq.), 7 CFR part 15, and USDA regulations promulgated there under, 7 C.F.R. 1901.202. RMA requires that recipients submit Form RD 400-4, Assurance Agreement (Civil Rights), assuring RMA of this compliance prior to the beginning of the project period.

10. Requirement To Participate in a Post Award Teleconference

RMA requires that project leaders participate in a post award teleconference to become fully aware of agreement requirements and for delineating the roles of RMA personnel and the procedures that will be followed in administering the agreement and will afford an opportunity for the orderly transition of agreement duties and obligations if different personnel are to assume post-award responsibility.

C. Reporting Requirements

Award recipients will be required to submit quarterly progress reports, quarterly financial reports (OMB Standard Form 269), and quarterly Activity Logs (Form RME-3) throughout the project period, as well as a final program and financial report not later than 90 days after the end of the project period.

Recipients will be required to submit prior to the award:

- A completed and signed Form RD 400-4, Assurance Agreement (Civil Rights).
- A completed and signed OMB Standard Form LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities".
- A completed and signed AD-1047, "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters—Primary Covered Transactions".
- A completed and signed AD-1049, "Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace".
- A completed and signed Faith-Based Survey on EEO.

VII. Agency Contact

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact: Eric Edgington, USDA-RMA-IS, 1400

Independence Ave. SW., Stop 0805, Room 6715, Washington, DC 20250-0805, phone (202) 690-2539, fax (202) 690-2095, e-mail: Eric.Edgington@rma.usda.gov. You may also obtain information regarding this announcement from the RMA Web site at: <http://www.ma.usda.gov/aboutrma/agreements>.

VIII. Other Information

A. Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)

A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. The Office of Management and Budget published a notice of final policy issuance in the **Federal Register** June 27, 2003 (68 FR 38402) that requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement on or after October 1, 2003. Therefore, potential applicants should verify that they have a DUNS number or take the steps needed to obtain one. For information about how to obtain a DUNS number, go to <http://www.grants.gov>. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.

B. Required Registration With the Central Contract Registry for Submission of Proposals

The Central Contract Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database will also be used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government. Such organizations must register in the CCR prior to the submission of applications. A DUNS number is needed for CCR registration. For information about how to register in the CCR, visit "Get Started" at the Web site, <http://www.grants.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 business days to complete the CCR registration.

C. Related Programs

Funding availability for this program may be announced at approximately the same time as funding availability for similar but separate programs—CFDA No. 10.455 (Community Outreach and Assistance Partnerships), CFDA No. 10.456 (Risk Management Research Partnerships), CFDA No. 10.458 (Crop Insurance Education in Targeted States), and CFDA No. 10.459 (Commodity Partnerships Small Sessions program).

These programs have some similarities, but also key differences. The differences stem from important features of each program's authorizing legislation and different RMA objectives. Prospective applicants should carefully examine and compare the notices for each program.

Signed in Washington, DC on June 12, 2006.

Eldon Gould,

Manager, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

[FR Doc. 06-5442 Filed 6-15-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-08-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Information Collection; Request for Comments; Land Exchanges

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Forest Service is seeking comments from all interested individuals and organizations on the extension of the currently approved information collection 0596-0105—Land Exchanges.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing on or before August 15, 2006 to be assured of consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: Comments concerning this notice should be addressed to Cynthia R. Swanson, Assistant Director, Lands, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Mail Stop 1124, Washington, DC 20250-1124.

Comments also may be submitted via facsimile to (202) 205-1604 or by e-mail to: lands/wo@fs.fed.us.

All comments, including names and addresses when provided, are placed in the record and are available for public inspection and copying. The public may inspect comments received at the Office of the Assistant Director—Lands Staff, Yates Building, 201 14th Street, SW., Washington, DC. Visitors are encouraged to call ahead at (202) 205-1248 to facilitate entry into the building.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Cynthia R. Swanson, Assistant Director—Lands Staff, at (202) 205-1248 or Kathleen L. Dolge, Realty Specialist, at (202) 205-1248. Individuals who use telecommunications devices for the deaf may call the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339, 24 hours a day, every day of the year, including holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Land Exchanges.

OMB Number: 0596-0105.

Expiration Date of Approval:

December 31, 2006.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: Land exchanges are discretionary, voluntary real estate transactions between the Secretary of Agriculture (acting by and through the Forest Service) and a non-Federal exchange party (or parties). Land exchanges can be initiated by a non-Federal party (or parties), an agent of a landowner, a broker, a third party, or a non-Federal public agency.

Each land exchange requires preparation of an *Agreement to Initiate*, as required by Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), part 254, subpart C,

section 254.4—Agreement to Initiate an Exchange. This document specifies the preliminary and non-binding intentions of the non-Federal land exchange party and the Forest Service in pursuing a land exchange. The *Agreement to Initiate* can contain such information as the description of properties being considered in the land exchange, an implementation schedule of action items, identification of the party responsible for each action item, as well as target dates for completion of each action item.

As the exchange proposal develops, the Forest Service and the non-Federal land exchange party may enter into a binding *Exchange Agreement*, pursuant to Title 36 CFR part 254, subpart A, section 254.14—Exchange Agreement. The *Exchange Agreement* documents the conditions that must be met to complete the exchange. The *Exchange Agreement* can contain information such as identification of parties, description of lands and interests to be exchanged, identification of all reserved and outstanding interests, and all other terms and conditions necessary to complete the exchange.

The Forest Service collects the information from the non-Federal party (or parties) necessary to complete the *Agreement to Initiate* and the *Exchange Agreement*. The information is collected by Forest Service personnel from parties involved in the exchange via telephone or in person. Data from this information collection is unique to each land exchange and is not available from other sources. No standardized forms are associated with this information collection.

Item	Agreement to initiate	Exchange agreement
Estimate of Annual Burden Hours	1	1
Type of Respondents	(*)	(*)
Estimated Annual Number of Respondents	60	60
Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent	1	1
Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours on Respondents	60	60

*Non-Federal Land Exchange Party.

Comment is invited on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the stated purposes or the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical or scientific 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 respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All comments received in response to this notice, including name and address when provided, will become a matter of public record. Comments will be summarized and included in the request

for Office of Management and Budget approval.

June 7, 2006.

Frederick R. Norbury,

Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System.

[FR Doc. E6-9422 Filed 6-15-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P