

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 70, No. 14

Monday, January 24, 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.

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Board for International Food and Agricultural Development

One Hundred and Forty-Third Meeting; Notice of Meeting

Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, notice is hereby given of the one hundred and forty-third meeting of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD). The meeting will be held from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on February 3rd, 2005 at the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC), 1307 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, DC (13th & H St.).

The BIFAD will address an agenda focusing on future directions of international agriculture development programs, priorities for implementing and monitoring USAID's new Agricultural Strategy, better linkages with the private sector, items dealing with the Collaborative Research Support Programs (CRSPs), better integration of Title XII Legislation within programs, and other items of general interest.

The meeting is free and open to the public. Those wishing to attend the meeting or obtain additional information about BIFAD should contact John Swanson, the Designated Federal Officer for BIFAD. Write him in care of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Ronald Reagan Building, Office of Agriculture and Food Security, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Room 2.11-06, Washington, DC 20523-2110 or telephone him at (202) 712-5602 or fax (202) 216-3010.

Dated: January 13, 2005.

John Swanson,

USAID Designated Federal Officer for BIFAD, Office of Agriculture and Food Security, Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture & Trade.

[FR Doc. 05-1241 Filed 1-21-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6116-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. # FV-05-326]

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 intention of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to request a new information collection in support of the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Processed Fruits and Vegetables and Related Products.

DATES: Comments may be submitted on or before March 25, 2005.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS: Contact Terry B. Bane, Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 0247, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250-0247; fax (202) 690-1527; or e-mail terry.bane@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The "Domestic Origin Verification System" (DOVS) audit program is a user-fee service, available to suppliers, processors, and any financially interested party. It is designed to provide validation of the applicant's domestic origin verification system prior to bidding on contracts to supply food products to the Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Domestic Feeding programs, and/or may be conducted after a contract is awarded.

DOVS was established to evaluate prospective applicants' systems for assurance that only domestic products are delivered under USDA contracts, and to establish procedures for applicant system evaluations as well as acceptance and rejection criteria.

Title: "Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Processed Fruits and Vegetables and Related Products—7 CFR 52."

OMB Number: To be assigned.

Expiration Date of Approval: To be announced.

Type of Request: New information collection.

Abstract: The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-*et seq.*) (AMA) directs and authorizes the Department to develop standards of quality, grades, grading programs, and other services to facilitate trading of agricultural products and assure consumers of quality products, which are graded and identified under USDA programs. Section 203(h) of the AMA specifically directs and authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to inspect, certify, and identify the grade, class, quality, quantity, and condition of agricultural products under such rules and regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, including assessment and collection of fees for the cost of the service. The regulations for such services for processed fruits and vegetables and related products may be found at 7 CFR Part 52. AMS also provides other types of voluntary services under the same regulations, *e.g.*, contract and specification acceptance services, facility assessment services, and certifications of quantity and quality. Grading services are available on a resident basis or a lot-fee basis. Respondents may request resident service on a continuous basis or on an as-needed basis. The user (user-fee) pays for the service. The AMA and these regulations do not mandate the use of these services; they are provided only to those entities that request or apply for a specific service. In order for the Agency to satisfy those requests for service, the Agency must request certain information from those who apply for service. The information collected is used only by Agency personnel and is used to administer services requested by the respondents. Affected public may include any partnership, association, business trust, corporation, organized group, and state, county, or municipal government, and any authorized agent that has a financial interest in the commodity involved and requests service.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2.25 hours per response (225 total hours divided by 100 total annual responses).

Respondents: Applicants who are applying for grading and inspection services.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 100.

Estimated Number of Responses: 100.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 225.

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 Mr. Terry B. Bane, Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 0247, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington DC 20250-0247; fax (202) 690-1527; or e-mail terry.bane@usda.gov.

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 received will become a matter of public record and 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.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.

Dated: January 13, 2005.

A. J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 05-1181 Filed 1-21-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. # TM-04-13]

National Organic Program (NOP); Nominations for Task Force Members

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) at its October 12-14, 2004, meeting recommended the formation of two ad hoc task force groups to develop draft organic standards. One task force will develop proposed production, handling, and labeling standards for food and animal feed products derived from aquatic animals. The second task force will develop proposed organic labeling standards for pet food. This notice calls for nominations for members to these two task force groups.

DATES: Written nominations, with resumes, must be post-marked on or before February 23, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Nominations should be sent to Ms. Katherine E. Benham, Advisory Board Specialist, USDA-AMS-TMP-NOP, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 4008-S, Ag Stop 0268, Washington, DC 20250-0268.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Keith Jones, Director, Program Development, National Organic Program, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Room 4008-S, Ag Stop 0268, Washington, DC 20250-0268; Telephone: (202) 720-3252; Fax: (202) 205-7808; e-mail: keith.jones@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Why Are These Task Force Groups Being Formed?

Two areas of agricultural products left unregulated by the current NOP regulations are: (1) production, handling, and labeling standards for food and animal feed products derived from aquatic animals and (2) labeling standards for pet food.

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (OFPA), as amended (7 U.S.C. 6501 *et seq.*), includes "fish used for food" within the definition of livestock. This language provides the authority for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish national standards for the production, handling and labeling of these products when they are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic. The USDA interprets the OFPA language to include both finfish and shellfish.

During April-May 2000, the NOP conducted public meetings in Mobile, Alabama; Anchorage, Alaska; and Providence, Rhode Island. These meetings were designed to solicit public input regarding the potential of certifying as organic aquatic animals harvested from aquaculture and wild or open-sea production. Twenty-nine individuals presented testimony during the three public meetings, including representatives from commercial wild harvest and aquaculture producers,

organic certification organizations, State regulatory programs, and consumer and environmental interest groups. In addition, the NOP solicited public comment on this issue in a March 22, 2000, **Federal Register** notice (65 FR 15579). The USDA received a total of 44 public comments on the questions raised in this notice.

An analysis of the comments at the time showed little consensus on organic certification of products derived from aquatic animals. Commenters both favored and opposed developing production and handling standards for aquatic animals. In order to more fully examine the issues raised by the commenters, the NOSB formed an aquatic animal task force at its June 6-7, 2000, meeting. In October 2001, this task force issued a general recommendation calling for the development of standards for the certification of aquaculture production and a prohibition on the development of standards for the certification of wild-harvested aquatic animals. The full task force report may be obtained at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/FinalRecommendations/Oct01/AquaticTaskForce.html>, or by contacting the NOP at the address shown in this notice.

However, since 2001, the interest in the certification of aquatic animals has grown significantly. Some USDA-accredited organic certification agents have developed private standards to address the market demand for these products. Further, a rider to the Supplemental Appropriations Bill, passed by Congress in April 2003, resolved any previous uncertainty about whether organic standards for wild-harvested aquatic animals could be developed under the authority of the OFPA (7 U.S.C. 6506 (c)). This new section reads:

“(c) WILD SEAFOOD

(1) IN GENERAL—Notwithstanding the requirements of Section 2107(a)(1)(A) requiring products to be produced only on certified organic farms, the Secretary shall allow, through regulations promulgated after public notice and opportunity for public comment, wild seafood to be certified as organic.

(2) CONSULTATION AND ACCOMMODATION—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

- (A) consult with—
 - (i) the secretary of Commerce;
 - (ii) the National Organic Standards Board established under section 2119;
 - (iii) producers, processors, and sellers; and
 - (iv) other interested members of the public;

and

(B) to the maximum extent practicable, accommodate the unique characteristics of the industries in the United States that harvest and process wild seafood.”