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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. No. LS-02-17]

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 from the Office of Management and Budget approval for an extension of and revision to a currently approved information collection "Customer Service Survey (Meat Grading and Certification Services)."

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 24, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Send a copy of your comments to Larry R. Meadows, Chief, Meat Grading and Certification Branch, Livestock and Seed Program, AMS, USDA; STOP 0248, Room 2628-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0248.

Comments will be available for public inspection at the above address during regular business hours. Comments may also be submitted by e-mail to Larry.Meadows@usda.gov or by facsimile at 202-690-4119. All comments should reference the docket number (LS-02-17), the date, and the page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Customer Service Survey (Meat Grading and Certification Services).

OMB Number: 0581-0193.

Expiration Date of Approval: June 30, 2003.

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

Abstract: The customer service survey is being conducted to evaluate how well we are meeting our customer's expectations. The information obtained will be used to manage the program in providing cost effective, quality services expected by our customers.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.0830 hours per response.

Respondents: Producers and owners of meat establishments.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 450 respondents.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 37.35 hours.

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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Larry R. Meadows, Chief, Meat Grading and Certification Branch, telephone 202-720-1246, facsimile 202-690-4119, or e-mail at Larry.Meadows@usda.gov.

Dated: December 16, 2002.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 02-32307 Filed 12-23-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Research Service

National Agricultural Library; Notice of Intent To Seek Approval To Collect Information

AGENCY: Agricultural Research Service, USDA

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), this notice announces the National Agricultural Library's intent to request approval for a new information collection from the Technical Services Division to obtain suggestions for additions/changes to the NAL Agricultural Thesaurus.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by February 27, 2003 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments concerning this notice to Lori Finch, Thesaurus Specialist, 10301 Baltimore Ave., Room 011; Beltsville, MD 20705. Submit electronic comments to lfinch@nal.usda.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lori Finch, Thesaurus Specialist, Phone: 301-504-6853; Fax: 301-504-5213.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Suggestions for Changes to NAL Agricultural Thesaurus Form.

OMB Number: Not yet assigned.

Expiration Date: N/A.

Type of Request: Approval for new data collection.

Abstract: The collection of suggestions for changes to the NAL Agricultural Thesaurus will provide Web site users with the opportunity to suggest the addition of new terminology of interest to them. The Thesaurus Staff will review each suggestion via a Proposal Review Board and provide feedback to the user. This form will provide the NAL Thesaurus Staff with valuable suggestions to improve the content and organization of the NAL Agricultural Thesaurus. It is hoped that an online form that is readily available to users who search the thesaurus would encourage users to submit their ideas and needs for terminology.

The Suggestions for Changes to NAL Agricultural Thesaurus Form is a

document composed of 8 inquiry components allowing users to submit suggestions for changes to the thesaurus. Information to be submitted includes, user contact information (name, affiliation, email, phone), the proposed changes to the thesaurus, the field of study or subject area of the term being proposed, justification for the change, and any reference material which the user would like to provide as background information. Name, email and phone components are mandatory.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per response.

Respondents: The agricultural community, USDA personnel and their cooperators, and including public and private users or providers of agricultural information.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 250 per year.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 2500 minutes.

Comments: 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 will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and the assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technology. Comments should be sent to the address in the preamble. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated: November 27, 2002.

Caird E. Rexroad, Jr.,

Acting Associate Administrator.

[FR Doc. 02-32309 Filed 12-23-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-03-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Report on Electronic Benefits Transfer Systems

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of request for public comment.

SUMMARY: The Food and Nutrition Service, Benefit Redemption Division, would like to obtain public comments on specific topics related to initiatives and advances in electronic benefit delivery for the issuance of food stamp benefits. The purpose of obtaining public input on electronic benefits transfer (EBT) systems is to offer State agencies, advocacy groups, food retailers, EBT-system vendors, and other interested parties the opportunity to provide input on EBT issues and initiatives prior to the submission of a report on EBT systems to Congress.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 24, 2003 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be submitted to Lizbeth Silbermann, Chief, Electronic Benefit Transfer Branch, Benefit Redemption Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302. Comments may also be datafaxed to the attention of Ms. Silbermann at (703) 305-1863, or by e-mail to lizbeth.silbermann@fns.usda.gov. All comments will be open for public inspection at the office of the Food and Nutrition Service during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday) at 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia, Room 403.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-171, requires the Secretary of Agriculture to submit a report on EBT systems to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate by October 1, 2003. In an effort to supplement the information that will be provided to Congress with the views of all parties involved with EBT, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is seeking public input through this notice on two general areas of EBT: (1) food stamp EBT initiatives being developed or considered by interested parties, and (2) potential advances in electronic benefit delivery in the next 5 to 10 years, particularly with respect to farmers' markets, fraud identification, and fostering of increased competition among EBT-system vendors.

EBT Initiatives

FNS is seeking information and comments on initiatives and advancements being developed, considered or taken by State agencies, food retailers, EBT-system vendors, client advocates, and other interested parties to address any outstanding issues with respect to EBT systems. Of

particular interest are potential advances in electronic benefit delivery in the next 5 to 10 years with respect to the following areas:

1. Farmers' markets—Because farmers' markets and produce stands do not have ready access to phone lines and electricity, the infrastructure for EBT does not exist. Although all farmers have the option to use manual vouchers, it is not the ideal solution because the process is not conducive to the way business is handled at these markets. FNS has been exploring alternatives to manual vouchers to improve operations for these vendors. One option is a scrip system; food stamp clients would use their EBT cards at a central Point of Sale (POS) location in exchange for scrip and then exchange the scrip with individual vendors at the market for food. The second alternative utilizes wireless equipment to authorize food stamp purchases in a market setting. Several States have operated scrip and/or wireless pilots that have been tested. FNS is interested in receiving comments on the pilots and other possible improvements to the way farmers and farmers' markets participate in EBT.

2. Fraud identification—FNS' Anti-fraud Locator of EBT Retailer Transactions (ALERT) Subsystem. ALERT utilizes a file of retailer EBT transactions provided by the States' contracted EBT processors to identify suspicious transaction activity. It assesses and analyzes over 67 million, individual EBT transactions per month. ALERT makes available, on line, a series of reports and queries, as well as the actual transaction data, to assigned Departmental and Agency staff with retailer and compliance monitoring responsibilities. This data triggers further analysis and investigations, which may result in on-site reports, investigations, prosecutions and administrative sanctions. It also enables investigators to track the stores at which a given recipient redeems benefits. Transactions and locations can be further analyzed in terms of overall shopping patterns in all stores. This information is then used to better target investigations or to act on program violators through administrative sanction procedures. FNS is interested in gathering input on possible advances in the increased use of transaction data from EBT systems to identify and prosecute fraud.

3. Fostering increased competition—Due to concern over pricing increases, FNS commissioned a report, the "Electronic Benefits Transfer Alternatives Analysis," to explore ways to increase competition in the EBT marketplace and keep EBT costs