

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 through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments should reference OMB No. 0581-0083 and the California Raisin Marketing Order No. 989, and be sent to USDA in care of Valerie L. Emmer at the address above. 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 will become a matter of public record.

Dated: August 16, 1996.

Robert C. Keeney,

Director, Fruit and Vegetable Division.

[FR Doc. 96-21330 Filed 8-20-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

Commodity Credit Corporation

Farmland Protection Program

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ACTION: Notice of Request of Proposals (RFP).

SUMMARY: Section 388 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (the 1996 Act) established the Farmland Protection Program (FPP). The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) administers the FPP under the general supervision of the Vice President of the CCC who is the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). CCC is requesting proposals from States, Tribes, and units of local government to cooperate in the acquisition of conservation easements or other interests in prime, unique, or other productive soil for the purpose of limiting non-agricultural uses of that land.

DATES: Proposals must be received by September 13, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Please send proposals to Ann E. Carey, Director, Community Assistance and Resource Development Division, Natural Resources Conservation Service, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, DC 20013-2890. Fax: 202-690-0639; e-mail: acarey@usda.gov. Attention: FPPRFP.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ann E. Cary, Director, Community Assistance and Resource Development Division, Natural Resources Conservation Service, phone: 202-720-2847; fax: 202-690-0639; e-mail: acarey@usda.gov. Attention: FPP.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Availability of Funding in Fiscal Year 1996

Effective on the date of publication of this notice, the CCC will accept proposals from States, Tribes, and units of local government that have pending offers with landowners for the acquisition of conservation easements or other interests in land that contains prime, unique, or other productive soils. The pending offers must be for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land. CCC will evaluate the merits of the requests for participation utilizing criteria described in this notice and will enter into cooperative agreements with the States, Tribes, or units of local government that have proposals that CCC determines will effectively meet the objectives of the FPP. CCC must receive proposals for participation by September 13, 1996.

Background

According to the 1987 Census of Agriculture, one-third of the Nation's agricultural products are produced in metropolitan counties containing large cities. Another one-fourth of these agricultural products are produced in counties adjacent to significant urban populations. Historically, American settlements were located in areas where the land was most productive. Consequently, some of the Nation's most valuable and productive farmland is located in urban and developing areas. Nearly 85 percent of domestic fruit and vegetable production and 80 percent of our dairy products come from urban-influenced areas.

These areas are continually threatened by rapid development and urban sprawl. Several social and economic changes over the past three decades have influenced the rate at which land is converted to urban uses. Population growth and shifts in age distribution, the economy, and transportation have contributed to changes in agricultural land conversion rates. Urban sprawl has been a major cause of farmland development. Since 1960, an average of 1.5 million acres of farmland have been converted to other uses each year.

The gross acreage of farmland converted to urban development is not

necessarily the most troubling concern. A greater cause for concern is the quality of farmland that is being converted. In most States, prime farmland is being converted at 2 to 4 times the rate of other less-productive land. In addition, as development does occur, remaining acreage is placed under a greater environmental, economic, and social strain as agrarian and urbanizing interests compete. For the agricultural producer, increasing costs of production and liability risks are harmful byproducts of urban development. In addition, remaining acreage must be farmed more intensively, generating adverse impacts on water quality and soil health. For urban dwellers, issues such as pesticide overspray, animal nutrient odors, and noise are important concerns.

There is, therefore, an important national interest in the protection of farmland. Once developed, productive farmland with rich topsoil may be lost forever. Food security for the Nation must be taken into account. Agricultural lands are important components of historic landscapes and are equally important simply for their scenic beauty.

Legislative History

In the 1980 Farm Bill, Congress passed the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) (Pub. L. 97-98, Title XV, Subtitle I; 7 U.S.C. 4201-4209), which began the Federal government's effort to protect farmland from urbanization. Under this program, Federal agencies are required to evaluate the impacts of federally funded programs on converting farmland to non-agricultural uses, and consider alternative actions that would lessen the adverse impacts.

In 1990, Congress enacted the Farms for the Future (FFF) Act (Chapter 2, Subtitle E, Title XIV of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-624) which authorized the Agricultural Resource Conservation Demonstration Program. This program provided guaranteed loans and subsidized interest payments to help States finance farmland protection efforts. The USDA received funding appropriations for fiscal years 1992-94. Vermont was the only State to qualify for funding under FFF. No funds were appropriated for fiscal years 1995 and 1996. The program's statutory authority expires on September 30, 1996.

The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996

Enacted on April 4, 1996, section 388 of the 1996 Act directs the Secretary of Agriculture to establish and carry out the FPP. Under this program, the USDA

will purchase conservation easements or other interests in land with prime, unique, or other productive soil that is subject to a pending offer from a State or local government for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land.

Overview of the Farmland Protection Program

The FPP is intended to supplement State and local farmland programs. CCC will administer FPP through existing delivery systems. The NRCS is the agency responsible for administering the FPP in the field. The 1996 Act made up to \$35 million of funds available through the CCC to purchase easements or other interests with States, Tribes, or local agencies for farmland protection. The NRCS also encourage State and local entities to start new farmland protection programs by putting in place a superstructure and soliciting offers in order to be eligible for FPP program benefits.

NRCS State Conservationists may consult with the State Technical Committee (established pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 3861) and review the requests for participation for consistency with USDA priorities by using a ranking system (see discussion below), such as the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) or other site evaluation and ranking systems to determine: the likelihood of conversion considering developmental pressure, zoning, utility availability, and other related factors; the quality of the land considering the soils, economic viability, size and product sales; and other factors including its historical, scenic and environmental qualities.

Once all proposals for participation have been received, the Chief of NRCS, as a Vice President of the CCC, will authorize cooperative agreements to be developed by September 30, 1996, spelling out terms of the FPP for each proposal accepted. Allocation of the funds to the cooperating entities will be made by weighing such factors as the number of pending offers, the total number of eligible acres included in the offers, the capability of each entity to fund at least half of the acquisition costs of each of the offers selected for funding, the value of such offers, and the relative urgency of each offer.

To be selected for participation in the FPP, a pending offer must provide for the acquisition of an easement or other interests in land for a minimum duration of 30 years, with priority given to those offers providinn. If a pending offer is selected for participation in the FPP, the conveyance document used by the State or local program will contain

a reversionary clause. The reversionary clause will provide that all rights conveyed by the landowner under the document will become vested in the United States should the State or local program abandon or terminate the exercise of the rights so acquired. As a condition for participation, all lands enrolled shall be encompassed by a conservation plan developed and implemented according to the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide.

Eligible State, Tribal, or Local Farmland Protection Programs

A State, Tribe, or unit of local government that has a farmland protection program that purchases agricultural conservation easements for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting non-agricultural uses of land and that has pending offers may apply for participation as a cooperating entity with the FPP. A State, Tribe, or local program may apply for participation by submitting responses to the RFP to Ann E. Carey, Director, Community Assistance and Resource Development Division, NRCS.

NRCS will evaluate the State, Tribe, or local program based on the conservation benefits that are derived from such farmland protection efforts. An eligible State, Tribe, or local farmland protection program must: (1) Have demonstrated commitment to a long-term conservation of agricultural lands through legal devices, such as right-to-farm laws, agricultural districts, zoning, or land use plans; (2) use voluntary easements or other legal devices to protect farmland from conversion to non-agricultural uses; and (3) demonstrate a capability to acquire, manage, and enforce rights in land and interests in land. To avoid double counting, local and county programs must coordinate their proposals with each other and the State program, if their jurisdictions overlap.

Eligible Land

NRCS shall determine whether the farmland is eligible for enrollment and whether, once found eligible, the lands may be included in the program. The following land, if subject to a pending offer by a State, Tribe, or unit of local government, is eligible for enrollment in the FPP: (1) Land with prime, unique, or other productive soil; and (2) Other incidental land that would not otherwise be eligible, but when considered as part of a pending offer, NRCS determines that the inclusion of such land would significantly augment the protection of the associated farmland. The definition of prime, unique, or other productive soil can be

found in section 1540(c)(1) of the FPPA, 7 U.S.C. 4201(c)(1).

NRCS will only consider enrolling eligible land in the program that is configured in a size and with boundaries that allow for the efficient management of the area for the purposes of FPP. The land must have access to markets for its products, an infrastructure appropriate for agricultural production, and agricultural support services. NRCS will not enroll land that is owned in fee title by an agency of the United States, or land that is already subject to an easement or deed restriction that limits the conversion of the land to non-agricultural use. NRCS will not enroll otherwise eligible lands if NRCS determines that the protection provided by FPP would not be effective because of on-site or off-site conditions.

Proposals

Proposals submitted by a cooperating entity must include an overview of the program, the amount and source of funds available for easement acquisition, the parameters and their values used to set the acquisition priorities, and a listing of the offers including: (1) The priority of the pending offer; (2) the land parcel and its location; (3) the size of the parcel in acres; (4) the acres of the prime, unique, or other productive soil in the parcel; (5) the price offered by the landowner; (6) the proposed acquisition costs of the easement; (7) the type of easement to be used; (8) an indication of the accessibility to markets; (9) an indication of an existing agricultural infrastructure and other support system; (10) the level of threat from urban development; (11) other factors, such as LESA or other evaluation and assessment system, used for setting priorities for easement acquisition by the entity.

Ranking Considerations

Pending offers by a State, Tribe, or unit of local government must be for the acquisition of an easement or other interest in land for a minimum duration of 30 years. NRCS shall place priority on acquiring easements or other interests in land that provide the longest period of protection from conversion to non-agricultural use. NRCS may place higher priority where lands and locations are found to be the highest priority lands and locations by the States, Tribes, or units of local government based on an evaluation using the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system or other site evaluation and ranking system.

NRCS may also place higher priority on certain geographic regions or other factors where enrollment of particular lands may better achieve NRCS State and regional goals and objectives, or where participation would further existing governmental or private conservation projects. NRCS will give preference to acquisition of easements or interests in land where the cooperating entity shares the greater costs of enrolling such land.

Cooperative Agreements

The CCC will use a cooperative agreement with a State, Tribe, or unit of local government as the mechanism for participation in the FPP. The cooperative agreement will address: (1) The interests in land to be acquired; (2) the management and enforcement of rights; (3) the technical assistance that may be provided by the NRCS; (4) the holder of the easement or other interests in the land enrolled in the FPP; and (5) other requirements deemed necessary by CCC to protect the interests of the United States.

Signed at Washington, DC, on August 16, 1996.

Paul Johnson,

Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation, Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

[FR Doc. 96-21342 Filed 8-20-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-M

Food and Consumer Service

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request—Report of School Program Operations

AGENCY: Food and Consumer Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Food and Consumer Service (FCS) is publishing for public comment a summary of a proposed information collection. The proposed collection is an extension of a collection currently approved for the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Commodity Schools Program, and the Special Milk Program.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by October 21, 1996 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Send comments and requests for copies of this information collection to Alan Rich, Acting Chief, Data Base Monitoring Branch, Program Information Division, Food and

Consumer Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of FCS, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of FCS's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and 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 are to respond, including through the use of appropriate, automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All comments will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval of the information collection. All comments will become a matter of public record.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Alan Rich, (703) 305-2113.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Report of School Program Operations.

OMB Number: 0584-0002.

Expiration Date: November 30, 1996.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: The National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Commodity Schools Program, and the Special Milk Program are mandated by the National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1751, *et seq.*, and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, 42 U.S.C. 1771, *et seq.* Program implementing regulations are contained in 7 CFR Parts 210, 215, and 220. In accordance with 7 CFR 210.5(d)(1), § 215.11(c)(2), and § 220.13(b)(2), State agencies must submit a monthly report of program activity in order to receive Federal reimbursement for meals served to eligible participants.

Respondents: State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Commodity Schools Program, and the Special Milk Program.

Number of Respondents: 62.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: The number of responses includes initial, revised, and final reports submitted each month. The overall average is four submissions per State agency per reporting month for a total of 48 per year.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information

is estimated to average 37 hours per respondent.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 110,112 hours.

Dated: August 14, 1996.

William E. Ludwig,

Administrator, Food and Consumer Service.

[FR Doc. 96-21297 Filed 8-20-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-30-U

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Submission For OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce (DOC) has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

Agency: Bureau of the Census.

Title: 1997 Economic Census of Transportation—Commodity Flow Survey.

Form Number(s): CFR-1000, CFS-2000.

Agency Approval Number: None.

Type of Request: New collection.

Burden: 805,067 hours.

Number of Respondents: 100,000.

Avg Hours Per Response: 2 hours.

Needs and Uses: The economic census is the primary source of facts about the structure and functioning of the Nation's economy and features unique industry and geographic detail. Virtually every sector of the U.S. Economy will be covered in the 1997 Economic Census. The 1997 Commodity Flow Survey, a component of the Economic Census, will produce key statistics on the movement of freight in the United States. In the past, these types of data were used primarily by governmental agencies in planning for transportation infrastructure. Now these types of data are becoming increasingly important to the business sector for making decisions related to marketing and transportation strategies. The Commodity Flow Survey will be conducted with the guidance and co-sponsorship of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Department of Transportation. A sample of business establishments in mining, manufacturing, wholesale, and selected retail industries will receive, by mail, four questionnaires—one during each quarter of 1997. On each form, an establishment will be asked to report data for an average of 25 shipments selected during a designated one-week reporting period. This survey will provide a range of transportation