

Notices

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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.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-085-5]

Aquaculture; Public Meeting

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: We are issuing this notice to inform the aquaculture industries, interested parties, and the general public that a public meeting will be held to discuss how and to what extent the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service should regulate aquatic species and to discuss any other issues concerning possible regulation of aquaculture by the Agency.

DATES: The public meeting will be held on Friday, June 8, 2001, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will be held in the Community Meeting Room of the Twin Falls County Office Building, 246 Third Avenue East, Twin Falls, ID, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Idaho Aquaculture Association.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information about the APHIS public meeting, contact Dr. Otis Miller, Jr., National Aquaculture Coordinator, Center for Planning, Certification, and Monitoring, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 46, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231, (301) 734-6188.

For information regarding the annual meeting of the Idaho Aquaculture Association, call Mr. Dave Bruhn, Executive Secretary, Idaho Aquaculture Association, (208) 543-4898.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On May 4, 1999, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) titled "Aquaculture: Farm-Raised Fin Fish" in the **Federal**

Register (64 FR 23795-23796, Docket No. 98-085-1). We published this ANPR after receiving petitions¹ asking us to regulate aquaculture in various ways. Many petitioners asked us to define farmed aquatic animals as livestock. In general, the petitioners seemed to be interested in receiving the same services that domestic producers of livestock receive for animals moving in interstate and foreign commerce. However, based on the petitions alone, it was difficult for us to determine what segments of the industry want services and exactly what services they want. It was also difficult to determine the objectives sought by the petitioners who were requesting Federal regulation. We published the ANPR in an attempt to clarify the industry's needs, the nature of the services sought, and the concerns the petitioners had with regard to such regulations.

We received 55 comments² in response to the ANPR. A majority of the commenters supported the idea of APHIS regulation of cultured fin fish. Unfortunately, the commenters generally did not clearly distinguish between fin fish raised for food and ornamental fin fish. Commenters who wanted regulation were, however, very clear that they want programs to prevent and control disease and to support increased commerce, both domestic and export.

The commenters also suggested that any rulemaking initiated by APHIS be a negotiated rulemaking. In negotiated rulemaking, industry representatives and other interested persons meet with APHIS officials and draft proposed regulations together. The proposed regulations are then published for public comment. Negotiated rulemaking

is designed to ensure that all interested persons are involved together from the start in the development of regulations.

Unfortunately, negotiated rulemaking is not suitable for all situations. It works well when there is a small number of interested parties and the parties are easy to identify. This is not the case with aquaculture. Because the aquaculture industry is large and diverse, we would have difficulty identifying everyone who should be represented in a negotiated rulemaking. In addition, many parties outside of aquaculture would have a substantial interest in such a rulemaking. In our view, the number of people who would need to participate in a negotiated rulemaking would be too large and would suggest that negotiated rulemaking is not appropriate. Furthermore, a negotiated rulemaking would be expensive, and APHIS does not have adequate funds. Therefore, we have concluded that it would not be appropriate to pursue an aquaculture negotiated rulemaking.

However, we have not decided whether to pursue aquaculture rulemaking by other means. Before we make that decision, we want to have as much information as possible from all interested persons, and we want to provide you with as much opportunity as possible to discuss with us and inform us regarding the relevant issues.

Therefore, we are holding a series of public meetings. Public meetings allow all interested parties—industry representatives, producers, consumers, and others—to present their views and to exchange information among themselves and with APHIS.

There are no set agendas for the meetings. Any issues and concerns related to aquaculture and possible APHIS regulatory action can be discussed. However, we would like more information on three specific issues. These are issues that the people and organizations who commented on our ANPR either did not address or were unclear about. Specifically, if APHIS does propose regulations: (1) Should our program be mandatory or voluntary; (2) should we cover shell fish; and (3) should we cover ornamental fin fish?

Information elicited at the meetings could result in a new APHIS regulatory program or in changes to aquaculture-

¹ All the petitions and comments we received are a part of the rulemaking record for Docket No. 98-085-1. You may read the petitions and comments in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

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related services currently provided by APHIS.

We have scheduled this public meeting, the fourth meeting in our series, for Friday, June 8, 2001, in the Community Meeting Room of the Twin Falls County Office Building, Twin Falls, ID. If you wish to speak at the meeting, please register in advance by calling the Regulatory Analysis and Development voice mail at (301) 734-4339. Leave a message with your name, telephone number, organization, if any, and an estimate of the time you need to speak. You may also register at the meeting by following the instructions provided by an APHIS representative at the beginning of the meeting. Starting with the advance registrants, we will call speakers in the order in which they registered.

The meeting will begin at 2 p.m. and is scheduled to end at 5 p.m. We may end the meeting early if all the registered speakers have had a chance to speak and if no one else wants to speak. We may also extend the meeting or limit the time allowed for each speaker, if necessary, so all interested persons have an opportunity to participate.

An APHIS representative will preside at the meeting. The meeting will be recorded. We encourage speakers to present written statements, though it is not required. If you choose to present a written statement, please provide the chairperson with a copy. The complete record, including the transcript and all written comments, will be available to the public.

This meeting is the fourth in our series of public meetings. The first public meeting was held on January 25, 2001, in Lake Buena Vista, FL. The second public meeting was held on February 16, 2001, in Hebron, KY, and the third public meeting was held on April 5, 2001, in Machias, ME. We plan to hold additional meetings in Washington (September 2001, in conjunction with the Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association Annual Conference), Pennsylvania (October 2001, in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Aquaculture Advisory Committee and Pennsylvania Aquaculture Association Annual Meeting), Mississippi (October 2001, in conjunction with a meeting of the Catfish Farmers of America), and Arkansas (October 2001, in conjunction with a meeting of the Catfish Farmers of Arkansas). We will publish a notice or notices in the **Federal Register** announcing the dates, times, and locations of the meetings.

Done in Washington, DC, this 4th day of May 2001.

Chester A. Gipson,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 01-11816 Filed 5-9-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-D

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Notice of Intent To Revise and Request an Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) implementing regulations, this notice announces the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service's (CSREES) intention to revise and extend a currently approved information collection, Form CSREES-667 "Proposal Cover Sheet," and Form CSREES-668, "Project Summary."

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received on or before July 16, 2001 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments regarding this notice to Sally J. Rockey, Deputy Administrator, Competitive Research Grants and Awards Management, CSREES, USDA, STOP 2240, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-2240. E-mail: OEP@reeusda.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sally J. Rockey, (202) 401-1761.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Grant Application Forms for the Small Business Innovation Research Grants Program.

OMB Number: 0524-0025.

Expiration Date of Approval: July 31, 2001.

Type of Request: Intent to revise and extend a currently approved information collection for three years.

Abstract: In 1982, the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program was authorized by Pub. L. 97-219, and in 1992 reauthorized through October 1, 2000, by Pub. L. 102-564. In 2000, the SBIR program was reauthorized through September 30, 2008, by Pub. L. 106-554. This legislation requires each Federal agency with a research and research and development budget in excess of \$100 million to establish an SBIR program.

The objectives of the SBIR Program are to stimulate technological innovation in the private sector, strengthen the role of small businesses in meeting Federal research and development needs, increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from USDA-supported research and development efforts, and foster and encourage participation by women-owned and socially and economically disadvantaged small business firms in technological innovation. The Program is carried out in three separate phases. The purpose of Phase I is to determine the scientific or technical feasibility of ideas; Phase II is the principal research or research and development effort; and Phase III is to stimulate technological innovation and the national return on investment from research through the pursuit of commercial objectives resulting from work carried out in Phases I and II.

USDA conducts its SBIR program through the use of grants awards and these grants are administered by the Agreements and Special Projects Branch and the Grants Management Branch, Office of Extramural Programs, Competitive Research Grants and Awards Management, CSREES. Each year, USDA issues an SBIR program solicitation requesting Phase I proposals. These proposals are evaluated by peer review panels and awarded on a competitive basis. The SBIR Program Solicitation requests that applicants submit proposals following the format outlined in the Small Business Administration (SBA) Policy Directive. This simplified and standardized proposal format is used by all of the Federal agencies participating in the SBIR Program in order to reduce the application burden of the small business firms that wish to apply to more than one agency.

Before awards can be made, certain information is required from applicants as part of an overall proposal package. In addition to project summaries, descriptions of the research or teaching efforts, literature reviews, curricula vitae of principal investigators, and other, relevant technical aspects of the proposed project, supporting documentation of an administrative and budgetary nature also must be provided. Because of the nature of the competitive, peer-reviewed process, it is important that information from applicants be available in a standardized format to ensure equitable treatment.

This program also uses forms approved in the OMB-approved collection of information package 0524-0039. These forms include Form