

the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (Federal and State beginning farmer programs provide joint financing to beginning farmers and ranchers); (2) methods of maximizing the number of new farming and ranching opportunities created through the program; (3) methods of encouraging States to participate in the program; (4) the administration of the program; and (5) other methods of creating new farming or ranching opportunities.

Departmental Regulation 1042-119 dated November 25, 1998, formally established the Committee and designated FSA to provide support. The Committee meets at least once a year and all meetings are open to the public. The duration of the Committee is indefinite.

The initial meetings of the Committee, held August 31-September 2, 1999, and April 11-12, 2000, provided an opportunity for members to exchange ideas on ways to increase opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers through Federal-State partnerships and to encourage more State participation. Members discussed various issues and drafted numerous recommendations, which were provided to the Secretary. During the June meetings, members will discuss the Secretary's responses and will formulate additional recommendations.

Attendance is open to all interested persons but limited to space available. Anyone wishing to make an oral statement should submit their request in writing (letter, fax, or e-mail) to Mark Falcone at the above address. Statements should be received no later than June 15, 2001. Requests should include the name and affiliation of the individual who will make the presentation and an outline of the issues to be addressed. The floor will be open to oral presentations beginning at 1:00 p.m. EST on June 19, 2001. Comments will be limited to 5 minutes, and presenters will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis.

Persons with disabilities who require special accommodations to attend or participate in the meetings should contact Mark Falcone by June 15, 2001.

Signed in Washington, DC, on June 1, 2001.

James R. Little,

Acting Administrator, Farm Service Agency.
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request—Repayment Demand and Program Disqualification

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this Notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on proposed information collections. This Notice of Proposed Information Collection announces the intent of the Food and Nutrition Service to extend the information collection requirements associated with initiating collection actions against households who have received an overissuance in the Food Stamp Program. In addition, this Notice announces the Food and Nutrition Service's intent to extend the information collection requirements associated with intentional Program violation determinations.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before August 6, 2001 to be assured consideration.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Barbara Hallman, Chief, State Administration Branch, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 820, Alexandria, Virginia, 22302.

Pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3507), 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 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: For initiating collection action, contact Susan Beard. For intentional Program

violation (IPV) determination, contact Greg Fortine. Both may be reached at (703) 305-2383.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Repayment Demand and Program Disqualification.

OMB Number: 0584-0492.

Form Number: None.

Expiration Date: August 31, 2001.

Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: Section 13(b) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, (7 U.S.C. 2022(b)) and Food Stamp Program (FSP) regulations at 7 CFR 273.18 require State agencies to initiate collection action against households that have been overissued benefits. To initiate collection action, State agencies need to provide an affected household with written notification informing the household of the claim and demanding repayment. This process is automated in most State agencies. For initiating collection action on an overissuance, we are reducing the estimated annual reporting and recordkeeping burden for State agencies and households from 148,846 hours to 116,400 hours. The reason for the decline is to reflect the lower number of claims that were established in fiscal year (FY) 2000.

Note that, for recipient claims, this **Federal Register** Notice only covers the reporting and recordkeeping burden for initiating collection action. The burden associated with reporting collections and other claims management information on the FNS-209 report is covered under currently approved OMB number 0584-0069. The burden associated with referring delinquent claims and receiving collections through the Treasury Offset Program is covered under currently approved OMB number 0584-0446.

FSP regulations at 7 CFR 273.16 require State agencies to investigate any case of suspected fraud, and, where applicable, make an IPV determination either administratively or judicially. Notifications and activity involved in the IPV process include:

- The State agency providing written notification informing an individual suspected of committing an IPV of an impending administrative disqualification hearing or court action.
- An individual opting to accept the disqualification and waiving the right to an administrative disqualification hearing or court action by signing either a waiver to an administrative disqualification hearing or a disqualification consent agreement in cases of deferred adjudication.
- Once a determination is made regarding an IPV, the State agency sends

notification to the affected individual of the action taken on the administrative disqualification hearing or court decision.

Despite the decrease in FSP participation, IPV activity has not experienced a similar decline. While no discernible trend exists in recent year disqualification data, available data from FY 2000 shows a small decrease in IPV activity when compared to the data used to establish the existing burden. Therefore, we are decreasing the State agency and household annual reporting and recordkeeping burden for the activities related to IPV disqualifications from 36,628 hours to 34,254 hours.

In addition, one of the factors used by a State agency to determine the appropriate disqualification penalty to assign to an individual is whether or not the individual was found to have committed any prior IPV's. The way that State agencies make this determination is by accessing and checking the Disqualified Recipient Subsystem (DRS). DRS is an automated system developed by the Food and Nutrition Service that contains records of disqualifications in every State. State agencies are responsible for updating the system and checking it to determine the appropriate length of each disqualification. The burden associated with State use of DRS for IPV's was not included in this original OMB-approved burden. We now intend to incorporate this activity under this OMB burden number. The additional annual burden associated with the DRS process is estimated at 14,340 hours per year.

Summary of Estimated Burden

The net aggregate change from the existing to the proposed annual burden for this entire Proposed Collection is a decrease of 20,480 hours. For initiating collection action on an overissuance, we are reducing the estimated annual burden for State agencies and households from 148,846 hours to 116,400 hours to reflect the lower number of claims established in FY 2000. The IPV-related State agency and household annual burden, is being reduced from 36,628 hours to 34,254 hours to reflect the lower number of disqualifications. The additional annual burden associated with the DRS process is estimated at 14,340 hours per year.

Affected Public: State and local government, and food stamp households.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 676,053.

Number of Responses per Respondent: From 1 to 5.

Total Number of Annual Responses: 1,536,129.

Estimated Time per Response: 0.1074 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: 164,994 hours.

Dated: May 25, 2001.

George A. Braley,

Acting Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Agency Information Collection: Proposed Collection; Comment Request; FNS-46, Issuance Reconciliation Report

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on proposed information collection contained in Form FNS-46, Issuance Reconciliation Report.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before August 6, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Send comments and requests for copies of this information collection to: Jeffrey N. Cohen, Branch Chief, Electronic Benefit Transfer Branch, Benefit Redemption Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302.

Pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3507), 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 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 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeffrey N. Cohen, (703) 305-2523.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Issuance Reconciliation Report.

OMB Number: 0584-0080.

Form Number: FNS-46.

Expiration Date: 07/31/2001.

Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: Section 7(d) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, requires the Secretary to require State agencies to report on their issuance operations not less than monthly. (7 U.S.C. 2016(d)) Section 11(a) of the Act requires State agencies to assume responsibility for the issuance, control and accountability of benefits. (7 U.S.C. 2020(a)) Regulations at 7 CFR 274.4(a) and 274.4(b)(2) require State agencies to account for all issuance through the reconciliation process and submit a report on such issuance using Form FNS-46, Issuance Reconciliation Report. These reports must be submitted to the Food and Nutrition Service monthly and must reach FNS no later than 90 days following the end of each report month. The FNS-46 report reflects the total issuance, returns, and unauthorized issuance amounts resulting in the net Federal obligation.

Affected Public: State and local government employees or contractors.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 238.

Estimated Number of Responses per respondent: 12.

Estimated Time per Response: 8 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: 22,848 hours annually.

Dated: May 31, 2001.

George A. Braley,

Acting Administrator.

[FR Doc. 01-14259 Filed 6-5-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-30-U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Proposed Changes in the National Handbook of Conservation Practices

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the intention of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to issue a series of new or revised conservation practice standards in its National Handbook of Conservation Practices.