

the Cattle Working Group and the Equine Species Working Group had provided performance standards for APHIS to employ when approving devices for use in the NAIS, so the standards included only the recommendations of those groups. Since then, the Swine Working Group and the Sheep and Goat Working Group have also provided recommendations, and in October 2007, we updated the Program Standards and Technical Reference document to include information specific to those species and made some other changes. We are, therefore, now making available to the public for review and comment this newly updated version of the Program Standards and Technical Reference document. We will continue to solicit public comments and stakeholder feedback on the document through the NAIS Web site.

Updates to the document include the following: (1) Adjustments to performance standards for identification eartags; (2) adjustments to printing standards for individual animal identification eartags; (3) the addition of printing standards for slaughter swine premises identification; and (4) the adjustment of our performance standards for radio frequency identification (RFID) injectable transponders to allow for the potential use of alternate International Organization for Standardization (ISO) or U.S.-based technology standards. These updates are discussed in more detail below.

Performance Standards for Identification Eartags

In the February 2007 Program Standards and Technical Reference document, we included a table outlining performance standards for identification eartags. These standards focused on cattle, since the Cattle Working Group had provided performance standards and since cattle were the primary species using NAIS identification at that time. We have now updated the performance standards for "Readability" and "Tag loss rates" to include information specific to sheep and goats and swine. For readability, we have added a note indicating that, for swine, the premises identification number (PIN) must also be easily and reliably readable. For tag loss rates, we have specified separate performance requirements for cattle (noting that the requirements for cattle should be used for all other species not specified in the table), sheep and goats, and swine. Due to the addition of eartag identification performance standards for species other than cattle, we have also changed the

title of the table from "Identification Eartag" to "Performance Standards for Identification Eartags for all Species that use Eartags."

Printing Standards for Eartags

In the February 2007 Program Standards and Technical Reference document, we included a table containing printing standards for identification eartags. As with the performance standards discussed above, the printing standards focused on cattle, since the Cattle Working Group had provided standards and since cattle were the primary species using NAIS identification at that time. We have now updated those standards to address the needs for unique, individual animal identification for sheep and goats and swine. Specifically, we have provided for the following options: (1) The use of smaller print sizes for the U.S. Shield, numbers, and letters, if needed, on tags for sheep and goats; (2) the inclusion of an eight-character series in the National Uniform Eartagging System, in addition to the current nine-character series, to accommodate the need for smaller eartags in smaller species such as swine and sheep; (3) the continuing use of a PIN plus an individual animal number unique to the premises for swine as an alternative to the animal identification number (AIN); and (4) the use of a number issued by the scrapie program consisting of a flock identification number (FIN) plus an individual animal number unique to the flock for sheep and goats as an alternative to the AIN. We have also changed the title of the table from "Printing Standards for Eartags" to "Printing Standards for Individual Animal ID Eartags" to differentiate these standards for "individual animal identification" eartags from the standards for "premises identification" eartags for slaughter swine. Slaughter swine do not require unique, individual animal identification.

Printing Standards for Slaughter Swine Premises Identification

The Swine Working Group recently provided recommendations related to printing standards necessary for official identification for slaughter swine premises identification. This updated October 2007 Program Standards and Technical Reference document now provides a table, directly following the "Printing Standards for Individual Animal ID Eartags" table described above, outlining the printing standards for slaughter swine premises identification eartags. The February 2007 document did not have such a table.

Adjustment to Performance Requirements for RFID Injectable Transponders

The February 2007 Program Standards and Technical Reference document included a table outlining performance requirements for RFID injectable transponders, as recommended by the Equine Species Working Group. Continuing work with this group resulted in an application to be used by manufacturers of such devices to gain approval by APHIS for use in the NAIS. The application indicates that other ISO or U.S.-based technology standards might be approved for use by APHIS, so the "ISO Compliant" standard has been adjusted to read, "All transponders must be certified by ICAR [International Committee for Animal Recording] for conformance with ISO 11784 and 11785, unless other ISO or U.S.-based technology standards are applicable to livestock and approved for use by APHIS."

Comments about the revised Program Standards and Technical Reference document or other aspects of the NAIS may be submitted to USDA through the NAIS Web site e-mail address: animalidcomments@aphis.usda.gov or by mail to NAIS Program Staff, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road, Unit 200, Riverdale, MD 20737.

Done in Washington, DC, this 29th day of November 2007.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. E7-23524 Filed 12-4-07; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Opportunity for Designation in Maryland, New Jersey, and New York

AGENCY: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for applications.

SUMMARY: The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) has received inquiries, letters, and requests for official services in the currently unassigned states of Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. GIPSA plans to designate one or more organizations qualified to provide official services in Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. GIPSA is asking persons interested in providing official services in all or part of the unassigned areas of Maryland,

New Jersey, and New York to submit an application for designation.

DATES: Applications must be postmarked or electronically dated on or before January 4, 2008.

ADDRESSES: We invite you to submit applications and comments on this notice. You may submit applications and comments by any of the following methods:

- To apply for designation, go to FGIS online, Web page https://fgis.gipsa.usda.gov/default_home_FGIS.aspx. Select *Delegations/Designations and Export Registrations (DDR)*. You need e-authentication and a customer number prior to applying.

- *Hand Delivery or Courier:* Deliver to Karen Guagliardo, Review Branch Chief, Compliance Division, GIPSA, USDA, Room 1647-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250.

- *Fax:* Send by facsimile transmission to (202) 690-2755, attention: Karen Guagliardo.

- *E-mail:* Send via electronic mail to Karen.W.Guagliardo@usda.gov.

- *Mail:* Send hardcopy to Karen Guagliardo, Review Branch Chief, Compliance Division, GIPSA, USDA, STOP 3604, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3604.

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments and reading any comments posted online.

Read Applications and Comments: All applications and comments will be available for public inspection at the office above during regular business hours (7 CFR 1.27(b)).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen Guagliardo at 202-720-7312, e-mail Karen.W.Guagliardo@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This Action has been reviewed and determined not to be a rule or regulation as defined in Executive Order 12866 and Departmental Regulation 1512-1; therefore, the Executive Order and Departmental Regulation do not apply to this action.

Section 7(f)(1) of the United States Grain Standards Act, as amended (Act), authorizes GIPSA's Administrator to designate a qualified applicant to provide official services in a specified area after determining that the applicant is better able than any other applicant to provide such official services.

Section 7(g)(1) of the Act provides that designations of official agencies shall not end later than triennially and may be renewed according to the

criteria and procedures prescribed in section 7(f) of the Act.

GIPSA is asking for applicants to provide official services in Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. The areas being considered for assignment to the applicant or applicants selected for designation, pursuant to section (7)(2) of the Act, are as follows:

The entire state of Maryland, except those export port locations within the State which are served by GIPSA.

The entire state of New Jersey, except those export port locations within the State which are served by GIPSA.

The entire state of New York, except those export port locations within the State which are served by GIPSA.

Opportunity for designation. Interested persons are hereby given the opportunity to apply for designation to provide official services in the geographic areas specified above under the provisions of section 7(f) of the Act and section 800.196(d) of the regulations issued thereunder. Designation in the specified geographic areas is for a period of no more than 3 years. To apply for designation, contact the Compliance Division at the address listed above for forms and information, or obtain applications at the GIPSA Web site, <http://www.gipsa.usda.gov>. Applications, comments, and other available information will be considered in determining which applicant will be designated.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 71-87k.

Alan Christian,

Acting Administrator, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Information Collection Activity; Comment Request

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended), the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) an agency delivering the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Utilities Programs invites comments on this information collection for which approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will be requested.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by February 4, 2008.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michele L. Brooks, Acting Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1522, Room 5159 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-1522. FAX: (202) 720-8435.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR part 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies an information collection that RUS is submitting to OMB for extension.

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. Comments may be sent to: Michele L. Brooks, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 1522, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1522. FAX: (202) 720-8435.

Title: Electric Loan Application and Related Reporting Burdens.

OMB Number: 0572-0032.

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

Abstract: The Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*), as amended (RE Act) authorizes and empowers the Administrator of RUS to make and guarantee loans to furnish and improve electric service in rural areas. These loans are amortized over a period of up to 35 years and secured by the borrower's electric assets. In the interest of protecting loan security, monitoring compliance with debt covenants, and ensuring that RUS loan funds are used for purposes authorized by law, RUS requires that borrowers prepare and submit for RUS evaluation, certain