

a reluctance by OIRA to use return letters. Both senior agency employees and other observers (including several former OIRA officials) also suggested that a decrease in OIRA staffing in recent years may have been another contributing factor. In addition, the executive review process has become more complicated for all parties involved as regulations have grown increasingly complex, interagency coordination has become more important, and various transparency and procedural requirements have grown more demanding.

The Administrative Conference has long supported effective executive review of agency rulemaking, and has emphasized the importance of timeliness and transparency in this process. In Recommendation 88–9, the Conference stated that “[t]he process of presidential review of rulemaking, including agency participation, should be completed in a timely fashion by the reviewing office and, when so required, by the agencies, with due regard to applicable administrative, executive, judicial and statutory deadlines.”¹⁸ Similarly, in Recommendation 93–4, the Conference asserted that “the reviewing or oversight entity should avoid, to the extent possible, extensive delays in the rulemaking process.”¹⁹ The Conference has also issued several recommendations advocating a transparent OIRA review process.²⁰

Building upon these prior Conference initiatives addressing executive review, the

Recommendation 88–9, *Presidential Review of Rulemaking*, ¶ 1, 54 FR 5207 (Feb. 2, 1989) (“[Presidential review] can improve the coordination of agency actions and resolve conflicts among agency rules and assist in the implementation of national priorities.”).

¹⁸ Administrative Conference of the United States, Recommendation 88–9, *Presidential Review of Agency Rulemaking*, ¶ 3, 54 FR 5207 (Feb. 2, 1989).

¹⁹ Administrative Conference of the United States, Recommendation 93–4, *Improving the Environment for Agency Rulemaking*, 59 FR 4670 (Feb. 22, 1994).

²⁰ Administrative Conference of the United States, Recommendation 88–9, *Presidential Review of Rulemaking*, ¶ 5, 54 FR 5207 (Feb. 2, 1989) (“An agency engaged in informal rulemaking should be free to receive guidance concerning that rulemaking at any time from the President, members of the Executive Office of the President, and other members of the Executive Branch, without having a duty to place these communications in the public file of the rulemaking unless otherwise required by law. However, official written policy guidance from the officer responsible for presidential review of rulemaking should be included in the public file of the rulemaking once a notice of proposed rulemaking or final rule to which it pertains is issued or when the rulemaking is terminated without issuance of a final rule.”); Administrative Conference of the United States, Recommendation 80–6, *Intragovernmental Communications in Informal Rulemaking Proceedings*, ¶ 2, 45 FR 86,407 (Dec. 31, 1980) (“When the rulemaking agency receives communications from the President, advisers to the President, the Executive Office of the President, or other administrative bodies which contain material factual information (as distinct from indications of governmental policy) pertaining to or affecting a proposed rule, the agency should promptly place copies of the documents, or summaries of any oral communications, in the public file of the rulemaking proceeding.”).

Conference now offers a discrete set of principles for improving the timeliness of review and the transparency concerning the causes for delay. The OIRA review process involves many components and participants. Delays may not be attributable to any single cause but rather can arise from multiple factors (and complex interactions amongst them) involving numerous players, including OIRA, agencies submitting rules for review, and other agencies and offices in the interagency review process (including other parts of the EOP). As a result, the Conference wishes to highlight a number of principles that OIRA and agencies should consider to improve review times and enhance transparency concerning the timing of the review process.

The Conference reaffirms its long-term support of the basic presidential regulatory review process²¹ and seeks to ensure that it functions as effectively and efficiently as practicable. The values of transparency, credibility, management effectiveness, and the rule of law apply to the executive review process, even if it is not subject to judicial oversight.

The following principles suggest ways that both OIRA and the agencies can promote timely and transparent OIRA review:

1. The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) should, whenever possible, adhere to the timeliness provisions of Executive Order (EO) 12,866. The Administrator of OIRA should continue to focus on improving OIRA review times. In so doing, the Administrator should consider preparing a publicly available document that identifies any specific policies that OIRA, regulatory agencies, and other agencies participating in interagency review should undertake in order to ensure that the measures of timeliness return to historical averages under this executive order.

2. Agencies and OIRA should coordinate prior to the submission of a completed rulemaking package. To the extent possible, OIRA should use the regulatory planning process created by section 4 of EO 12,866 to identify all of the relevant entities, establish lines of communication among them, and create workplans with timelines and responsibilities for action. The section 4 process should be used to identify the principal factual and policy issues likely to

²¹ See, e.g., Administrative Conference of the United States, Recommendation 93–4, *Improving the Environment for Agency Rulemaking*, 59 FR 4670 (Feb. 1, 1994) (“We continue to support presidential coordination of agency policymaking as beneficial and necessary.”); Administrative Conference of the United States, Recommendation 88–9, *Presidential Review of Agency Rulemaking*, 54 FR 5207 (Feb. 2, 1989) (“Presidential review should apply generally to federal rulemaking. Such review can improve the coordination of agency actions and resolve conflicts among agency rules and assist in the implementation of national priorities.”); Administrative Conference of the United States, Recommendation 80–6, *Intragovernmental Communications in Informal Rulemaking Proceedings*, 45 FR 86,407 (Dec. 31, 1980) (“Because the President, as the nation’s Chief Executive, may be deemed accountable for what agencies do, efforts to achieve policy coordination through Presidential channels have become increasingly significant.”).

be raised by a proposed rulemaking and to convey any presidential priorities respecting them. OIRA should hold itself available to mediate such disputes among the identified agencies as may arise, and to assure that all participating agencies place a high priority on the resulting processes, so as not to cause undue delays.

3. Though OIRA has the final authority for determining which rules will be classified as “significant,” the agency should decide the point at which it will submit a draft rule to OIRA for review under EO 12,866. Once an agency has submitted a completed rulemaking package with approval from the appropriate senior agency official(s) within the meaning of EO 12,866, the clock for the review period should commence.

4. In connection with interagency review, OIRA should promptly send the draft rule to all of the relevant entities and, to the extent feasible, establish a timeline by which these entities should submit comments. All participating entities should place a high priority on the review process so as to avoid undue delays.

5. If OIRA concludes that it will be unable to complete the review of an agency’s draft rule within a reasonable period of time after submission, recognizing the timeframes established in section 6(b)(2) of EO 12,866 and the nature of the matter—but in no event beyond 180 days after submission—OIRA should inform the public as to the reasons for the delay or return the rule to the submitting agency.

6. OIRA’s staffing authorization should be increased to a level adequate to ensure that OIRA can conduct its regulatory reviews under EO 12,866 in a timely and effective manner. In addition, or as an alternative, staff from rulemaking agencies could be detailed to OIRA.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS–2013–0096]

Notice of Request for Extension of Approval of an Information Collection; Importation of Ovine Meat From Uruguay

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Extension of approval of an information collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s intention to request an extension of approval of an information collection associated with the regulations for the importation of ovine meat from Uruguay into the United States.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before February 18, 2014.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0096-0001>.

- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:* Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2013-0096, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Supporting documents and any comments we receive on this docket may be viewed at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0096> or in our reading room, which 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) 799-7039 before coming.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information on the regulations for the importation of ovine meat from Uruguay, contact Dr. Silvia Kreindel, Senior Staff Veterinarian, Regionalization Evaluation Services Staff, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 38, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 851-3313. For copies of more detailed information on the information collection, contact Mrs. Celeste Sickles, APHIS' Information Collection Coordinator, at (301) 851-2908.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: *Title:* Importation of Ovine Meat From Uruguay.

OMB Number: 0579-0372.

Type of Request: Extension of approval of an information collection.

Abstract: Under the Animal Health Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 8301 *et seq.*), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is authorized, among other things, to prohibit or restrict the importation and interstate movement of animals and animal products to prevent the introduction into and dissemination within the United States of animal diseases and pests. The regulations for the importation of animals and animal products are contained in 9 CFR parts 92 through 98.

The regulations in part 94 provide the requirements for the importation of specified animals and animal products to prevent the introduction into the United States of various animal

diseases, including rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). The regulations in § 94.22 place certain restrictions on the importation of beef and ovine meat from Uruguay into the United States. These restrictions allow the importation of ovine meat from Uruguay under certain conditions to prevent the introduction of FMD. These conditions involve an information collection activity that requires APHIS to collect certification for each shipment from an authorized veterinary official of the Government of Uruguay that the conditions in § 94.22 have been met.

We are asking the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve our use of this information collection activity for an additional 3 years.

The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public (as well as affected agencies) concerning our information collection. These comments will help us:

- (1) Evaluate whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- (2) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the burden of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- (3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- (4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, through use, as appropriate, of automated, electronic, mechanical, and other collection technologies; e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

Estimate of burden: The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.6 hours per response.

Respondents: Federal animal health officials of the Government of Uruguay.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 5.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 1.

Estimated annual number of responses: 5.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 8 hours. (Due to averaging, the total annual burden hours may not equal the product of the annual number of responses multiplied by the reporting burden per response.)

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.

Done in Washington, DC, this 12th day of December 2013.

Kevin Shea,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (Council) will meet in Washington, DC. The Council is established consistent with Section 9 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act, as amended by Title XII, Section 1219 of Public Law No. 101-624, and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (5 U.S.C. App. II). Additional information concerning the Council can be found by visiting the Council's Web site at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/ucf/nucfac.html>.

DATES: The meeting will be held on January 22 and 23, 2014, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or until Council business is completed.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be at the USDA South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250-9911, Wing 3, First Floor, Cafeteria Room 1 and 2. Written comments may be submitted as described under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**. All comments, including names and addresses when provided, are placed in the record and are available for public inspection and copying. The public may inspect comments received at the USDA Forest Service—Washington Office. Please call ahead to facilitate entry into the building.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy Stremple, Executive Staff to the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council, by mailing address at 201 14th Street, SW., Yates Building (3 Southeast), Washington, DC 20250; by phone at 202-205-7829, by cell phone at 202-309-9873 or by email at nstremple@fs.fed.us.

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.