

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

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Document Number AMS–NOP–15–0004; NOP–15–03]

National Organic Program; Nominations for Task Force Members

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is soliciting nominees to participate in a task force to examine hydroponic and aquaponic practices and their alignment with the USDA organic regulations and the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA). The USDA organic regulations do not include specific provisions for organic hydroponic or aquaponic production. However, these production systems have obtained certification under the USDA organic regulations by complying with the existing requirements for organic crop production. The task force will inform the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) of their findings and advise on what practices should be allowed or restricted in organic hydroponic and aquaponic production.

DATES: Written nominations, with resumes, must be post-marked on or before May 8, 2015. Electronic submissions must be received on or before May 8, 2015.

ADDRESSES: Nominations should be sent to Rita Meade, USDA–AMS–NOP, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Room 2648–So., Ag Stop 0268, Washington, DC 20250–0268 or via email to Rita.Meade@ams.usda.gov. Electronic submittals by email are preferred.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark Bradley, Assistant to the Deputy Administrator, National Organic Program, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Room 2648, STOP 0268;

Washington, DC 20250–0268; Telephone (202) 720–3252; Fax: (202) 205–7808; email: Mark.Bradley@ams.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Why is this task force being formed?

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, as amended (7 U.S.C. 6501–6522) provides for the certification of agricultural products for human consumption. To implement this Act, AMS published the USDA organic regulations on December 20, 2000. The regulations provide for the certification of crops and livestock production and operations that handle and process agricultural products. Hydroponic and aquaponic operations are currently being certified under the USDA organic regulations.

Hydroponics is a method of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions in water without soil. Terrestrial plants may be grown with their roots in the mineral nutrient solution only or in an inert medium, such as perlite, gravel, biochar, or coconut husk. Aquaponics combines the features of hydroponics and aquaculture. In these systems, the metabolic waste from fish tanks provides a source of nutrients for vegetables grown hydroponically. The USDA organic regulations do not include specific provisions for organic hydroponic or aquaponic production. However, there are certified organic operations observing the crop production requirements of the USDA organic regulations to produce organic crops via hydroponic or aquaponic growing methods. These operations, for example, must maintain water quality and use only approved inputs as fertilizers and pest control practices. Organic hydroponic production is allowed as long as the producer can demonstrate compliance with the USDA organic regulations.

In 2010, the NOSB provided recommendations to the NOP on Production Standards for Terrestrial Plants in Containers and Enclosures (Greenhouses). The NOSB recommended practice standards for growing terrestrial plants in containers using growing media rather than soil. The NOSB recommended not allowing organic hydroponic production because these systems are not soil based.

AMS is assembling a task force to assess the diversity of these soilless

production practices and advise on what specific practices may or may not be supported by the current USDA organic regulations.

What are the hydroponics task force's objectives and time requirements?

There are two main objectives of the task force: (i) To describe current hydroponic and aquaponic production methods used in organic production, and (ii) to assess whether these practices align with OFPA and the USDA organic regulations. The task force will prepare a report advising the NOSB on proposed standards or guidelines for hydroponic and aquaponic methods in organic agriculture. The report may be used to inform the NOSB on recommendations concerning hydroponic and aquaponic systems and for possible guidance or rulemaking by the NOP.

USDA will name the members of the task force approximately 120 days after the publication of this notice. The discussions between task force members will be conducted through electronic mail and conference calls with no requirement for travel. We expect the task force to present its completed report to the NOSB in the spring of 2016.

What are the minimum skills and experience requirements to be considered for this task force?

Candidates for the hydroponics and aquaponics task force should have 3 years of demonstrable work experience in hydroponic or aeroponic production in any of the following roles: Producer; researcher or scientist; consumer representative; conservationist; systems designer; organic inspector; or accredited certifying agent. Candidates with demonstrable knowledge of organic production or certification procedures are preferred.

Successful candidates should be familiar with the NOSB recommendation on *Production Standards for Terrestrial Plants in Containers and Enclosures (Greenhouses)*.

Persons interested in serving on this task force should submit their qualifications in a resume or curriculum vitae format. In addition to this information, candidates should submit, if applicable, a “declaration of interests” list. This list should state all direct commercial, financial, consulting, family, or personal relationships that

currently exist or have existed with business entities that may be regulated through any future rulemaking on these issues. The declaration of interests lists should cover activities undertaken by the candidate during the past 12 months.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 6501–6522.

Dated: March 4, 2015.

Rex A. Barnes,

Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 2015–05403 Filed 3–6–15; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

March 4, 2015.

The Department of Agriculture will submit the following information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104–13 on or after the date of publication of this notice. Comments regarding (a) 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; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; (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 should be addressed to: Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC; New Executive Office Building, 725 17th Street NW., Washington, DC, 20503. Commenters are encouraged to submit their comments to OMB via email to: OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov or fax (202) 395–5806 and to Departmental Clearance Office, USDA, OCIO, Mail Stop 7602, Washington, DC 20250–7602.

Comments regarding these information collections are best assured of having their full effect if received by April 8, 2015. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling (202) 720–8681.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number and the agency informs potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information that such persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Agricultural Marketing Service

Title: Regulations for the Inspection of Eggs.

OMB Control Number: 0581–0113.

Summary of Collection: Congress enacted the Egg Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 1031–1056) (EPIA) to provide a mandatory inspection program to assure egg products are processed under sanitary conditions, are wholesome, unadulterated, and properly labeled; to control the disposition of dirty and checked shell eggs; to control unwholesome, adulterated, and inedible egg products and shell eggs that are unfit for human consumption; and to control the movement and disposition of imported shell eggs and egg products that are unwholesome and inedible. Regulations developed under 7 CFR part 57 provide the requirements and guidelines for the Department and industry needed to obtain compliance. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will collect information using several forms. Forms used to collect information provide method for measuring workload, record of compliance and non compliance and a basis to monitor the utilization of funds.

Need and Use of the Information:

AMS will use the information to assure compliance with the Act and regulations, to take administrative and regulatory action and to develop and revise cooperative agreements with the States, which conduct surveillance inspections of shell egg handlers and processors. If the information is not collected, AMS would not be able to control the processing, movement, and disposition of restricted shell eggs and egg products and take regulatory action in case of noncompliance.

Description of Respondents: Business or other for-profit; Federal Government; State, Local or Tribal Government.

Number of Respondents: 818.

Frequency of Responses:

Recordkeeping; Reporting: On occasion; Quarterly.

Total Burden Hours: 1,909.

Agricultural Marketing Service

Title: Dairy Products Mandatory Sales Reporting.

OMB Control Number: 0581–0274.

Summary of Collection: The Mandatory Price Reporting Act of 2010 amended § 273(d) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, requiring the Secretary of Agriculture to establish an electronic reporting system for certain manufacturers of dairy products to report sales information under 7 CFR part 1170, the mandatory Dairy Product Mandatory Reporting Program. Data collection for cheddar cheese, butter, dry whey, or nonfat dry milk sales is limited to manufacturing plants producing annually 1 million pounds or more of one of the surveyed commodities specified in the program.

Need and Use of the Information:

Persons engaged in manufacturing dairy products are required to provide the Department of Agriculture (USDA) certain information, including the price, quantity, and moisture content, where applicable, of dairy products sold by the manufacturer. Various manufacturer reports are filed electronically on a weekly basis. Additional paper forms are filed by manufacturers on an annual basis to validate participation in the mandatory reporting program. Manufacturers and other persons storing dairy products must also report information on the quantity of dairy products stored. USDA publishes composites of the information obtained to help industry members make informed marketing decisions regarding dairy products. The information is also used to establish minimum prices for Class III and Class IV milk under Federal milk marketing orders. Without this information USDA would not be able to verify compliance with applicable regulations.

Description of Respondents:

Businesses—Cheddar Cheese, 40 lb. Blocks.

Number of Respondents: 181.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion; Weekly; Annually.

Total Burden Hours: 2,331.

Charlene Parker,

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 2015–05397 Filed 3–6–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Request for Information: Summer Meal Programs Data Reporting Requirements

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; request for information.