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Food and Nutrition Service

Title: Evaluation of Alternatives to Improve Elderly Access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Study.

OMB Control Number: 0584-NEW.

Summary of Collection: The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), under authorization of SEC. 17. [7 U.S.C. 2026] of the FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008, as amended, intends to conduct the Evaluation of Alternatives to Improve Elderly Access. FNS is interested in exploring whether policy options designed to improve access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for the elderly are effective. The objective of the study is to better understand how to maximize elder (60+) access to SNAP.

Need and Use of the Information: This study will provide FNS with a better understanding of the barriers to serving elderly populations in SNAP and the extent to which available policy options improve program access, whether certain program models or combinations are more effective than others, and what tradeoffs exist between program simplification/access goals and ensuring benefit adequacy.

Description of Respondents: Individuals/Households (681); Business-not-for-profit (90) and State, Local & Tribal agencies (253).

Number of Respondents: 1,024.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: Once.

Total Burden Hours: 1,380.

Ruth Brown,

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 2017-22793 Filed 10-19-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-30-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2008-0119]

Implementation of Revised Lacey Act Provisions

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 amended the Lacey Act to provide, among other things, that importers submit a declaration at the time of importation for certain plants and plant products. The declaration requirements of the Lacey Act became

effective on December 15, 2008, and enforcement of those requirements is being phased in. In 2009, we initiated a blanket declaration pilot program for participants in U.S. Customs and Border Protection's expedited border release programs. In this notice, we are announcing the end of the blanket declaration pilot program and providing guidance on how participants in the program may continue to file declarations as required by the Lacey Act.

DATES: The blanket declaration pilot program will end on April 18, 2018.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Richard Schading, Regulatory Policy Specialist, Permitting and Compliance Coordination, Compliance and Environmental Coordination Branch, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 60, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 851-2045.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Lacey Act (16 U.S.C. 3371 *et seq.*), first enacted in 1900 and significantly amended in 1981, is the United States' oldest wildlife protection statute. The Act combats trafficking in illegally taken wildlife, fish, and plants. The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, effective May 22, 2008, amended the Lacey Act by expanding its protections to a broader range of plants and plant products (Section 8204, Prevention of Illegal Logging Practices). As amended, the Lacey Act now makes it unlawful to, among other things, import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce any plant, with some limited exceptions, taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of any Federal, State, tribal, or foreign law that protects plants or that regulates the theft of plants; the taking of plants from a park, forest reserve, or other officially protected area; the taking of plants from an officially designated area; or the taking of plants without, or contrary to, required authorization.

In addition, Section 3 of the Lacey Act, as amended, makes it unlawful, beginning December 15, 2008, to import plants and plant products without an import declaration. The declaration must contain, among other things, the scientific name of the plant, value of the importation, quantity of the plant, and the name of the country in which the plant was harvested. Currently, enforcement of the declaration requirement is being phased in, as

described in five notices published in the **Federal Register**.¹

Commenters on these notices asked that we consider establishing a program through which importers could submit periodic blanket declarations instead of submitting declarations with each shipment. The commenters noted that such declarations would reduce the paperwork burden on affected entities, reduce costs, and could, in addition, improve the quality and usefulness of the information collected. Some commenters provided detailed descriptions of possible blanket declaration programs.

In response to these comments, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) began a pilot blanket declaration program on May 1, 2009 for participants in U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP's) expedited border release programs, Automated Line Release (ALR) or Border Release Advance Screening and Selectivity (BRASS) in CBP's Automated Commercial System (ACS). This pilot program tested the feasibility of collecting the required information through the use of a monthly "blanket" declaration, with subsequent reconciliation reports. Blanket declarations could be used to declare routine and/or repeat shipments. The pilot program for the Lacey Act blanket declaration was open only to those entities participating in ALR or BRASS. Eligible importers who wished to participate in the pilot were required to send a letter to APHIS specifically requesting participation in the program. Eighty-two individual companies registered a total of 119 participants with the pilot program. We note that by January 2017, only eight companies were still participating in the program.

Executive Order 13659 required CBP to create a "single window" for trade to file entries through its Automated Commercial Environment (ACE). As a result, the ACS was discontinued and entries are no longer filed in that system.

Due to the development of the ACE system, and a diminishing number of participants, APHIS has decided to end the pilot program on April 18, 2018. CBP's BRASS program will continue to operate as it did prior to the creation of the pilot program, and participants in the blanket declaration pilot program will not lose their line release status in the expedited border release programs. When the program ends, importers whose products are subject to the Lacey

¹ To view these notices and the comments we received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#/docketDetail;D=APHIS-2008-0119>.

Act declaration requirement and clear under the BRASS program are advised to file the required declaration information along with their CBP entry summary documentation.

Additional Information

APHIS will continue to provide the latest information regarding the Lacey Act on our Web site, http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/lacey_act/. The Web site currently contains the full text of the Lacey Act, as amended; a slideshow covering background and context, requirements, commodities and products covered, information on prohibitions, the current status of implementation of the declaration requirement of the Lacey Act, and frequently asked questions. The Web site will be updated as new materials become available. We encourage persons interested in receiving timely updates on APHIS' Lacey Act efforts to register for our stakeholder registry at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/subscriber/new/> and select "Lacey Act Declaration" as a topic of interest.

Done in Washington, DC, this 16th day of October 2017.

Michael C. Gregoire,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 2017-22800 Filed 10-19-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA); Dairy Assistance Program for Puerto Rico (DAP-PR) in Response to 2017 Hurricanes

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation and Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This NOFA is in response to the devastation to dairy operations left by 2017 hurricanes in Puerto Rico. This NOFA announces the availability of an estimated \$12 million to provide assistance to dairy operations in Puerto Rico for buying feed from feed dealers in Puerto Rico. Each dairy operation in Puerto Rico can apply to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to receive a voucher to purchase a one-month supply of feed for 100 percent of the feed cost, as calculated by FSA. At the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture, additional assistance may be provided for additional days of feed or for purchasing fuel if funds remain

available, taking into consideration, among other things, the value of the feed vouchers. DAP-PR assistance will be provided to help the dairy industry in Puerto Rico with the production and marketing of dairy.

DATES: *Application period:* October 20, 2017 through December 1, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lisa Berry, (202) 720-7641.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Certain 2017 hurricanes caused widespread destruction in Puerto Rico, including to dairy operations. Dairy operations in Puerto Rico suffered intense damage in late September, 2017. Puerto Rico and its residents continue to suffer severe hardships related to the availability of electricity, fuel, and water, among other things. As a result of the 2017 hurricanes, dairy operations in Puerto Rico face the possibility of financial and other, actual losses to their dairy operation due to amount of and availability of feed for their animals and lack of electricity to run their dairy operations until recovery operations are able to stabilize conditions on Puerto Rico. There are an estimated 94,000 dairy cows, heifers, and other livestock, such as bulls necessary for a dairy operation as part of Puerto Rico's 277 dairy operations. Dairy feed and fuel are both available on Puerto Rico; however, there are various challenges to dairy operations, including actual feed surcharges and the potential for additional surcharges, increasing the cost of feed to the dairy operations, and the recent preference of vendors subsequent to the hurricanes to be paid only in cash or certified check instead of their usual policy, prior to the hurricanes, to allow dairy operations to pay for feed with credit.

The Commodity Credit Corporation Charter (CCC) Act (15 U.S.C. 714c(b)) includes authority for CCC to use its general powers to make available materials and facilities required in connection with the production and marketing of agricultural commodities (other than tobacco). The procurement of feed and fuel for the dairy sector in Puerto Rico is required in connection with the production and marketing of dairy in Puerto Rico.

DAP-PR is being implemented as a NOFA, as opposed to a regulation, because it is one-time assistance to help Puerto Rico dairy operations purchase feed in connection with the production and marketing of dairy. FSA has designed DAP-PR as a simplified, stream-lined method to provide assistance as quickly as possible to dairy

operations in Puerto Rico given the extent of the disaster and the resulting need for feed assistance.

FSA will administer DAP-PR on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), using CCC funds.

DAP-PR Description

DAP-PR is anticipated to provide an estimated \$12 million to provide vouchers to dairy operations in Puerto Rico for acquiring feed from feed dealers in Puerto Rico. Each licensed dairy operation can apply to receive a voucher to acquire one-month supply of feed for 100 percent of the feed cost, as calculated by FSA. The value of the voucher does not guarantee a given quantity of feed. The feed may last less or more than 30 days, depending upon the feeding requirements of each dairy operation and how much feed is acquired.

FSA will prepare one voucher for the value of the required feed needs for each eligible dairy operation on Puerto Rico, as determined by FSA. The operation may elect to use the whole value of the voucher at one time, or may elect to use a portion of the voucher, up to 4 times, not to exceed the value of the voucher. The value of the voucher expires 45 days from the date approved by FSA. If any value remains on the voucher after it expires, that value may not be used by the dairy operation.

FSA, on behalf of CCC, through the vouchers themselves, will enter into agreements with Puerto Rican feed dealers to accept the vouchers from dairy operations. FSA will reimburse the dealers for the feed acquired via the vouchers. The voucher can only be used to acquire feed from the vendors and for no other purpose, including paying down any existing debt owed by a dairy operation or individual or producer affiliated with that dairy operation to a vendor.

Application and Eligible Applicants

Each dairy operation in Puerto Rico is licensed by the Department of Agriculture of Puerto Rico; as a result, FSA has received certain information from the Puerto Rican Department of Agriculture about each dairy, including, the name, address, contact information, and number of head of cattle. The information was compiled as of August 2017. An application, on a form determined by FSA, will include the number of dairy head as reported to FSA by the Puerto Rican Department of Agriculture, and should only reflect the number of live, eligible dairy cows at the time of application. If the number of cattle on the application is correct, the dairy operation will certify as such on