

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

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS–2018–0061]

Notice of Availability of Proposed Changes to the National Poultry Improvement Plan Program Standards

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that proposed changes to the National Poultry Improvement Plan Program Standards are available for review and comment.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before May 13, 2019.

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

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2018-0061>.

- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:* Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS–2018–0061, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A–03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737–1238.

The proposed standards and any comments we receive may be viewed at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2018-0061> 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: Dr. Denise Heard, DVM, Senior Coordinator, National Poultry Improvement Plan, VS, APHIS, USDA, 1506 Klondike Road, Suite 101,

Conyers, GA 30094–5104; (770) 922–3496; email: npip@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP), also referred to below as “the Plan,” is a cooperative Federal-State-Industry mechanism for controlling certain poultry diseases. The Plan consists of a variety of programs intended to prevent and control poultry diseases. Participation in all Plan programs is voluntary, but breeding flocks, hatcheries, and dealers must first qualify as “U.S. Pullorum-Typhoid Clean” as a condition for participating in the other Plan programs.

The Plan identifies States, flocks, hatcheries, dealers, and slaughter plants that meet certain disease control standards specified in the Plan’s various programs. As a result, customers can buy poultry that has tested clean of certain diseases or that has been produced under disease-prevention conditions.

The regulations in 9 CFR parts 56, 145, 146, and 147 (referred to below as the regulations) contain the provisions of the Plan. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) amends these provisions from time to time to incorporate new scientific information and technologies within the Plan.

In the past, APHIS has updated the regulations once every 2 years, following the Biennial Plan Conference of the NPIP General Conference Committee. The NPIP General Conference Committee advises the Secretary on poultry health and represents cooperating State agencies and poultry industry members. During its meetings and Biennial Conferences, the Committee discusses significant poultry health issues and makes recommendations to improve the NPIP.

However, while changes in diagnostic science, testing technology, and best practices for maintaining sanitation are continual, the rulemaking process can be lengthy. As a result, the regulations have, at times, become outdated. To remedy this problem, we determined that we needed a more flexible process for amending provisions of the Plan. On July 9, 2014, we published in the **Federal Register** (79 FR 38752–38768, Docket No. APHIS–2011–0101) a final

rule¹ that, among other things, amended the regulations by removing tests and detailed testing procedures, as well as sanitation procedures, from part 147, and making these available in an NPIP Program Standards document. The rule also amended the regulations to provide for the Program Standards document to be updated through the issuance of a notice in the **Federal Register** followed by a period of public comment. The latter change was intended to enable us to make the NPIP program more effective by allowing Plan provision updates without the need for rulemaking.

We are advising the public that we have prepared updates to the NPIP Program Standards document. The proposed updates would amend the standards by:

- Adding and amending definitions of H5/H7 low pathogenicity avian influenza (LPAI) (exposed) and H5/H7 LPAI (infected);
- Clarifying and amending the testing protocol for *Mycoplasma*;
- Allowing use of molecular-based examination procedures to screen for *Mycoplasma*;
- Removing specific agar gel immunodiffusion Avian Influenza testing procedures with directions to use the current National Veterinary Services Laboratories protocol;
- Amending and clarifying salmonella isolation procedures;
- Updating and clarifying bacteriological examination procedures for cull chicks and poulters for salmonella;
- Adding a new salmonella diagnostic test kit;
- Removing outdated testing procedures for the sanitation monitored program;
- Updating and clarifying hatching egg and hatchery sanitation requirements;
- Updating and clarifying flock sanitation procedures;
- Updating and clarifying cleaning and disinfecting procedures;
- Adding new dealer sanitation requirements;
- Updating and clarifying compartmentalization language as well as amending and clarifying audit guidelines and checklists; and

¹To view the final rule and related documents, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2011-0101>.

- Adding Newcastle disease virus compartmentalization physical requirements for an egg depot receiving/shipping dock.

After reviewing any comments we receive on the proposed updates, we will publish a second notice in the **Federal Register** announcing our decision regarding the proposed changes.

Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with section 3507(d) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), the information collection requirements included in this notice will be approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under OMB control number 0579-0007.

E-Government Act Compliance

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is committed to compliance with the E-Government Act to promote the use of the internet and other information technologies, to provide increased opportunities for citizen access to Government information and services, and for other purposes. For information pertinent to E-Government Act compliance related to this notice, please contact Ms. Kimberly Hardy, APHIS' Information Collection Coordinator, at (301) 851-2483.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 8301-8317; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.4.

Done in Washington, DC, this 5th day of April 2019.

Kevin Shea,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 2019-07214 Filed 4-10-19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Agricultural Statistics Service

Notice of Intent To Seek Approval To Create a New Information Collection

AGENCY: National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the intention of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to seek approval to conduct a new survey. The Irrigation Organizations Survey will be conducted in early 2020 referencing 2019 as the target year. A similar survey was last conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1978. The new survey supports the call

for Federal research and data on drought resiliency under the National Drought Resilience Partnership (NDRP) initiative, providing valuable input to Federal agencies and other stakeholders involved in resource assessment, conservation, and analysis. This survey will be conducted through a cooperative agreement between the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the Economic Research Service (ERS).

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by June 10, 2019 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by docket number 0535-NEW, by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* ombofficer@nass.usda.gov.

Include the docket number above in the subject line of the message.

- *E-fax:* (855) 838-6382.

- *Mail:* Mail any paper, disk, or CD-ROM submissions to: David Hancock, NASS Clearance Officer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 5336 South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-2024.

- *Hand Delivery/Courier:* Hand deliver to: David Hancock, NASS Clearance Officer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 5336 South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-2024.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kevin L. Barnes, Associate Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, (202) 720-2707. Copies of this information collection and related instructions can be obtained without charge from David Hancock, NASS—OMB Clearance Officer, at (202) 690-2388 or at ombofficer@nass.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: 2019 Irrigation Organizations Survey.

OMB Control Number: 0535-NEW.

Expiration Date of Previous Approval: None.

Type of Request: Intent to Seek Approval to create a New Information Collection.

Abstract: The 2019 Irrigation Operations Survey will be conducted through a cooperative agreement between the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the Economic Research Service (ERS). This agreement is for the development and implementation of a survey of irrigation organizations—defined to include irrigation districts and other entities that supply water (primarily surface water) directly to agricultural users, as well as groundwater management districts that

may influence the supply of groundwater for irrigation. While NASS regularly surveys agricultural producers who irrigate every five years through the Irrigation and Water Management Surveys (formerly called the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey), the last census of irrigation organizations was conducted in 1978 by the U.S. Census Bureau. The sector has undergone substantial change in the past forty years, with consolidation in surface water organizations, particularly among ditch companies, and many new organizations overseeing groundwater access. A new survey of irrigation organizations would collect local, district-scale information, including the adoption of alternative types of water allocation institutions and conservation policies that impact farm-level drought resiliency and adaptation to long-run water scarcity. The work supports the call for Federal research and data on drought resiliency under the National Drought Resilience Partnership (NDRP) initiative, providing valuable input to Federal agencies and other stakeholders involved in resource assessment, conservation, and analysis. The development of this important economic agricultural database serves the best interest of USDA, the agricultural community, and the Nation.

The project develops a nationally representative survey of irrigation water-supply management organizations. Data collected through the survey would include information compiled under the 1978 Census—such as organizational and governance structure, land area and farms, storage and conveyance facilities and services, water volumes by source, and costs and revenues. Additional data collected would involve water allocation institutions and drought mitigation measures. The survey of irrigation organizations would extend the scope of organizations to encompass groundwater management districts. The survey questionnaire would be developed by NASS and ERS, with input from Federal agency partners and other stakeholders.

Authority: A foundation for coordinated action on climate change preparedness and resilience across the Federal Government was established by Executive Order 13514 of October 5, 2009 (Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance), and the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force led by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In addition,