

- What financing tools facilitate access to capital for small meat and poultry processing companies? In your response, please consider the stage of corporate development (e.g., startup, onsite expansion, restarting an idled facility, new location), the potential use of funds (e.g., working capital, construction, credit lines, equipment), and the type of financing (e.g., grants, installment loans, balloon payment loans, equity like investments). Please also consider the prospective borrowers' type of business model (e.g., cooperative, farmer joint-ownership, employee-ownership, mobile meat- and poultry processing operations).

- What financing tools facilitate provision of capital by lenders who finance meat and poultry processors? In your response, please consider the type of lender (e.g., bank, credit union, loan fund) and the type of tool (e.g., loan guarantee, direct loan, debt to establish a revolving loan fund, grant to establish a revolving loan fund).

- What are the barriers or challenges to financing tools (e.g., gap between local lender expertise to support meat and poultry processing and the need for processing capacity), and are there changes that can be made to existing programs to mitigate these challenges?

- What type of upstream analysis of customers/product demand is needed to justify the level of lending or financial support?

- What barriers, if any, exist that reduce the ability of meat and poultry processor lenders to extend their geography?

- What barriers, if any, exist that reduce the ability of meat and poultry processor lenders to provide capital for multiple types of meat and poultry processors (e.g., different meats and poultry, different size processors, cooperatives, tribally owned or tribally affiliated operation)?

- What barriers, if any, exist that reduce access to capital for very small and small meat and poultry processors? In your response, consider collateral, capital, capacity, and other factors.

- What are the most pressing needs of the meat and poultry processing sector with regard to financing, and what action should USDA take in the immediate term to improve access to capital for small and very small meat and poultry processors?

- What types of technical assistance or capacity building support would be useful to lenders interested in starting or expanding their meat and poultry processing lending?

- What types of technical assistance or capacity-building support would be useful to lenders interested in starting or

expanding lending to tribally owned or affiliated meat and poultry processing operations?

- What types of technical assistance or capacity building support would be useful to lenders interested in starting or expanding lending to meat and poultry processing cooperatives?

- How could federal funds be best leveraged with state and local resources (matching funds, in-kind support, government assistance)?

#### 4. Grant Considerations

- Would a small plant expansion program structured similarly to USDA's Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant (MPIRG), but with a focus on expanding slaughter and processing capacity for small federally inspected plants, be beneficial? If so, at what award (\$) level per grant and for what types of costs?

- What types of planning grants are necessary that are not already covered by an existing USDA grant or other financial assistance program? What other federal programs could finance or have funded processing efforts and with which USDA could partner? Are sufficient grants available now for business planning for new ventures, or is that a gap that needs to be filled?

- Are grant funds (or other funds) needed for marketing or outreach activities, including recruiting new participants in the industry?

- Would pilot grants that provide awards to small plants for training and other support (e.g., cover wage gap during apprenticeships) to develop their local workforce be effective to address some of the labor challenges associated with operating a current, expanded, or new facility?

#### 5. Technical Assistance Considerations

- What are the top priorities for technical assistance that would facilitate processing expansion or increased capacity (e.g., butchery for key markets, HACCP, humane handling best practices for plant operators, labeling approval and processes, brand and market development)?

- Would regional or local cooperative agreements with strategic partners be the best way to provide this type of assistance, or are alternative ways preferable and more effective?

- In what ways could technical assistance support best be deployed to enhance competition and address challenges in the marketplace, how is it best delivered, and by whom?

- What workforce-related technical assistance is most needed, how is it best delivered, and by whom (e.g., best

industry practices, training on equipment, new tools for safety)?

#### 6. Partnerships and Combined Funding Considerations

- Who can USDA partner with to best leverage the federal funds (e.g., State and local governments, private investors, philanthropic organizations)?

- Should loans and grants be combined to support these facilities? If so, what criteria should be used to determine what portion of the funds are offered as loans versus grants?

- What conditions should be placed on grants or loans? If those conditions are not met, should the grants require repayment? If the conditions are met, should the loan be forgivable?

In consultation with this public comment process, USDA anticipates hosting a series of stakeholder meetings to learn more about existing plants that could serve as a model for other regions; identify plants that are looking to expand; identify strategies to overcome barriers to building new, maintaining, or expanding existing processing facilities; scope out financial needs to expand processing capacity; scope out the workforce challenges, including safety considerations, and needs for research, innovation, and investment to address workforce and workplace issues; and understand the non-financial barriers that USDA can break down to expand this sector.

**Mae Wu,**

*Deputy Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, U.S. Department of Agriculture.*

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#### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

##### Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Agriculture has submitted the following information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Comments are requested regarding: 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; the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and 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 regarding this information collection received by August 16, 2021 will be considered. Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website [www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain](http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain). Find this particular information collection by selecting “Currently under 30-day Review—Open for Public Comments” or by using the search function.

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.

#### Rural Housing Service

*Title:* 7 CFR 3550—Direct Single Family Housing Loan and Grant Program, HB-1-3550, HB-2-3550.

*OMB Control Number:* 0575-0172.

*Summary of Collection:* USDA Rural Development (RD) is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. RD’s Rural Housing Service (RHS or Agency) offers a variety of programs to build or improve housing and essential community facilities in rural areas. The Housing Act of 1949 provides the authority for the RHS’ direct single family housing loan and grant programs. The programs provide eligible applicants with financial assistance to own adequate but modest homes in rural areas. 7 CFR part 3550 sets forth the programs’ policies and the programs’ procedures can be found in its accompanying handbooks (Handbook-1-3550 and Handbook-2-3550). To originate and service direct loans and grants that comply with the programs’ statute, policies, and procedures, RHS must collect information from low- and very low-income applicants, third parties associated with or working on behalf of the applicants, borrowers, and third parties associated with or working on behalf of the borrowers. RHS will collect information using several forms.

*Need and Use of the Information:* RHS will collect information to verify program eligibility requirements; continued eligibility requirements for

borrower assistance; servicing of loans; eligibility for special servicing assistance such as: Payment subsidies, moratorium (stop) on payments, delinquency workout agreements; liquidation of loans; and, debt settlement. The information is used to ensure that the direct Single Family Housing Programs are administered in a manner consistent with legislative and administrative requirements. Without the information RHS would be unable to determine if a borrower would qualify for services or if assistance has been granted to which the customer would not be eligible under current regulations and statutes.

*Description of Respondents:* Individuals or households; Business or other for-profit; Not-for-profit institutions.

*Number of Respondents:* 106,300.

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

*Total Burden Hours:* 284,013.

*Title:* Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI).

*OMB Control Number:* 0575-0180.

*Summary of Collection:* Congress first authorized the Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) in 1999 with an appropriation of \$6 million under the Rural Community Advancement Program (Pub. L. 106-78, which was amended by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Pub. L. 114-113)). The Community Facilities Division under the Rural Housing Service (RHS) administers this grant program. The intent of the RCDI grant program is to develop the capacity and ability of rural area recipients to undertake projects through a program of financial and technical assistance provided by qualified intermediary organizations. Intermediaries may be private or public (including tribal) organizations. Intermediaries are required to provide matching funds in an amount equal to the RCDI grant. Eligible recipients are nonprofit organizations, low-income rural communities, or federally recognized tribes.

*Need and Use of the Information:* The information will be collected from applicants (intermediary organizations applying for the grant), grantees (intermediary organizations that are awarded the grant), recipients (entities that receive assistance from the intermediary), and beneficiaries (entities or individuals that benefit from assistance provided by the recipient) by RHS staff in the National Office and Rural Development field offices. This information is used to determine applicant and recipient eligibility, project feasibility, and to ensure that

grantees operate on a sound basis and use grant funds for authorized purposes. The Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA), published in the **Federal Register**, provides instructions for completing an application.

*Description of Respondents:* Not-for-profit institutions; State, Local or Tribal Government.

*Number of Respondents:* 90.

*Frequency of Responses:* Reporting: Quarterly; Annually; Third party disclosure.

*Total Burden Hours:* 4,194.

Levi S. Harrell,

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2021-0021]

#### Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment for Release of *Ganaspis brasiliensis* for Biological Control of Spotted-Wing *Drosophila* in the Continental United States

**AGENCY:** Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Agriculture (USDA).

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has prepared an environmental assessment relative to permitting the release of the insect *Ganaspis brasiliensis* for the biological control of spotted-wing *Drosophila* (*Drosophila suzukii*) in the continental United States. Based on the environmental assessment and other relevant data, we have reached a preliminary determination that the release of this control agent within the continental United States will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. We are making the environmental assessment available to the public for review and comment.

**DATES:** We will consider all comments that we receive on or before August 16, 2021.

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

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Enter APHIS-2021-0021 in the Search field. Select the Documents tab, then select the Comment button in the list of documents.
- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:* Send your comment to Docket No.