

Notices

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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

[Docket No. FV96-501-N]

Notice of Request for Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), this notice announces the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) request for comments from the fruit, vegetable and ornamental industry to improve or change the procedures for collecting information used to compile and generate new and expand existing fruit, vegetable and ornamental reports to assist the trade in making production and marketing decisions.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by December 13, 1999, to be assured of consideration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS: Contact Terry C. Long, Chief, Fruit and Vegetable Market News Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS-USDA, Room 2503 South Building, PO Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456; Telephone: (202) 720-2745, Fax: (202) 720-0547.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Fruit and Vegetable Market News.

OMB Number: 0581-0006.

Expiration Date of Approval: February 29, 2000.

Type of Request: Extension and revision of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: Collection and dissemination of information for fruit, vegetable and ornamental production and to facilitate trading by providing a

price base used by producers, wholesalers, and retailers to market product.

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627), section 203(g) directs and authorizes the collection and dissemination of marketing information including adequate outlook information, on a market area basis, for the purpose of anticipating and meeting consumer requirements, aiding in the maintenance of farm income and to bring about a balance between production and utilization.

The fruit and vegetable industry provides information on a voluntary basis, and is gathered through confidential telephone and face-to-face interviews by market reporters. Reporters request supplies, demand, and prices of over 400 fresh fruit, vegetable, nut ornamental, and other specialty crops.

The fruit and vegetable market news reports are used by academia, but are primarily used by the fruit, vegetable and ornamental trade, which includes packers, processors, brokers, retailers, and producers. The fruit and vegetable industry requested that the Department of Agriculture issue price and supply market reports for commodities of regional, national and international significance in order to assist them in making immediate production and marketing decisions and as a guide to the amount of product in the supply channel.

Many government agencies use the reports to make their market outlook projections. Data from these reports is included in the information forwarded to the Secretary's office as well, as his staff, as needed, to keep them apprised of the current market conditions and movement of fruit, vegetable, and ornamental commodities in the United States. Economists at most major agricultural colleges and universities use the reports to make both short and long term market projections. The data is used extensively by consulting firms and private economists to aid them in determining available supplies and current pricing.

The information is collected, compiled, and disseminated by an impartial third party, in a manner which protects the confidentiality of the reporter. Further, since the Government is a purchaser of fruits and vegetables,

a system to monitor the collection and reporting of data is needed.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .033 hours per response.

Respondents: Fruit, vegetable, and ornamental industry, or other for-profit businesses, individuals or households, farms, or Federal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 18,361.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 200.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 121,010.

Comments are invited on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) 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 may be sent to: Terry C. Long, Chief, Fruit and Vegetable Market News Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS-USDA, Room 2503 South Building, PO Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456.

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.

Dated: October 7, 1999.

Robert C. Keeney,

Deputy Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs.

[FR Doc. 99-26803 Filed 10-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Total Quality Systems Audit Implementation

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.