

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

Rural Utilities Service

Information Collection Activity; Comment Request

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended), the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) invites comments on this information collection for which approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will be requested.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by June 7, 2010.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michele Brooks, Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 1522, Room 5162 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 690-1078. FAX: (202) 720-8435. E-mail: michele.brooks@wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies an information collection that RUS is submitting to OMB for an extension.

Comments are invited on: (a) 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; (b) 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; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (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. Comments may be sent to: Michele Brooks, Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 1522, Room 5162 South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1522. FAX: (202) 720-8435.

Title: Assistance to High Energy Cost Rural Communities.

OMB Control Number: 0572-0136.

Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (RE Act) (7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*) was amended in November 2000 to create a new program to help rural communities with extremely high energy costs (Pub. L. 106-472). Under this new section 19 of the RE Act (7 U.S.C. 918a), the Secretary of Agriculture, through RUS, is authorized to provide financial assistance through the following three funding streams:

- **High Energy Cost Grants and Loans.** RUS may provide grants and loans for energy generation, transmission, and distribution facilities serving communities with average home energy costs in excess of 275 percent of the national average. Many of these communities are in rural Alaska, but there are other eligible areas nationwide. Eligible applicants include persons, State agencies (including Territories), entities organized under State law, and Indian Tribes. Only grant funds have been appropriated to date.

- **Denali Commission Grants and Loans.** RUS may provide grants and loans to the Denali Commission, a Federal agency, for energy generation, transmission, and distribution facilities serving extremely high energy cost rural and remote communities in Alaska. Annual Denali grants are awarded and advanced as soon as funds are available to RUS. The Denali Grants are governed by a Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies and by

individual Grant Agreements. Only grant funds have been appropriated to date.

- **Bulk Fuel Revolving Fund Grants.** RUS may provide grants to State entities in existence as of November 9, 2000, to support revolving loan funds to improve the efficiency of fuel purchases for communities where the fuel cannot be delivered by surface transportation. Only Alaska and a handful of other States are eligible.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 4.32 hours per response.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit, Not-for-profit institutions, State, Local, or Tribal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 112.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.82.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 1,365.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Gale Richardson, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, at (202) 720-0992, FAX: (202) 720-8435. 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: March 30, 2010.

Jessica Zufolo,

Deputy Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

[FR Doc. 2010-7733 Filed 4-5-10; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2009-0088]

Notice of Availability of an Evaluation of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Status of Czech Republic and Sweden

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has prepared an evaluation of the animal health status of the Czech Republic and Sweden relative

to the H5N1 subtype of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The evaluation presents our assessment of the HPAI H5N1 detection, control, and eradication measures in place in the Czech Republic and Sweden following the outbreaks of HPAI in Sweden during 2006, and in the Czech Republic during 2007, as well as our assessment of the present status of the Czech Republic and Sweden with respect to HPAI H5N1. We are making this evaluation available to the public for review and comment. If, after the close of the comment period, we can identify no additional risk factors that would indicate that domestic poultry in the Czech Republic and Sweden continue to be affected with HPAI H5N1, we will remove those regions from our list of regions affected with HPAI H5N1.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before May 6, 2010.

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

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to (<http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2009-0088>) to submit or view comments and to view supporting and related materials available electronically.

- Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery: Please send two copies of your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2009-0088, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. APHIS-2009-0088.

Reading Room: You may read any comments that we receive on the evaluations in our reading room. The reading room 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) 690-2817 before coming.

Other Information: Additional information about APHIS and its programs is available on the Internet at (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov>).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Julia Punderson, Senior Staff Veterinarian, Regionalization Evaluation Services-Import, National Center for Import and Export, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 38, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 734-4356.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under the Animal Health Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 8301 *et seq.*), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has the authority to prohibit or restrict the importation into the United States of animals, animal products, and other articles in order to prevent the introduction of diseases and pests into the U.S. livestock and poultry populations.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is a zoonotic disease of poultry. The H5N1 subtype of HPAI is an extremely infectious and fatal form of the disease. HPAI can strike poultry quickly without any warning signs of infection and, once established, can spread rapidly from flock to flock. HPAI viruses can also be spread by manure, equipment, vehicles, egg flats, crates, and people whose clothing or shoes have come in contact with the virus. HPAI viruses can remain viable at moderate temperatures for long periods in the environment and can survive indefinitely in frozen material. The H5N1 subtype of HPAI has been of particular concern because it has crossed the species barrier and caused disease in humans.

On March 17, 2006, the Swedish Board of Agriculture reported their first case of HPAI H5N1 in domestic poultry to the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE). The outbreak was confirmed in mallard ducks on a game bird breeding farm in the village of Gässhult, Oskarshamn, in Kalmar County, located in an area which had already been under restriction since February 2006 due to the detection of HPAI H5N1 in wild birds. No further reports of the HPAI H5N1 in wild or domestic birds have been reported in Sweden since that time.

On June 22, 2007, the Director of the Department of Animal Health and Welfare in Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic reported the first occurrence of HPAI H5N1 in domestic poultry to the OIE. The outbreak was confirmed in a flock of 6,000 turkeys near Tisova, Usti nad Orlici district, in the Pardubicky Region and then spread to other neighboring commercial poultry farms over the following weeks.

To prevent the introduction of HPAI H5N1 into the United States, APHIS added the regions of the Czech Republic and Sweden where the outbreaks occurred to the list of regions that APHIS considers to be affected with HPAI H5N1.¹ This action resulted in

restrictions on the importation of bird, poultry, and birds and poultry products into the United States from those two regions.

We have evaluated the status of HPAI H5N1 in domestic and wild poultry in the Czech Republic and Sweden in light of the actions taken by the Czech and Swedish authorities since the outbreaks. We present the results of our evaluation in a document titled "APHIS' Evaluation of the Status of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza H5N1 (HPAI H5N1) in the Czech Republic and Sweden" (July 2009), and document our analysis of the risk associated with allowing the importation of birds, poultry, and poultry products from regions of the Czech Republic and Sweden into the United States in the aftermath of the outbreaks.

We based our evaluation of the Czech Republic's and Sweden's HPAI H5N1 status on the following critical factors:

- Each region had been free of outbreaks of the H5N1 subtype in its domestic poultry for at least 3 months as a result of effective control measures taken by a competent veterinary infrastructure;
- HPAI H5N1 was a notifiable disease in each region at the time of the outbreak;
- Each region had an ongoing disease awareness program in place at the time of the outbreak;
- Each region investigated, all notified, and/or suspected occurrences of the disease;
- Each region had an effective surveillance program in place that supported the detection and investigation of outbreaks;
- Diagnostic and laboratory capabilities within each region were both adequate and effective;
- Each region undertook appropriate eradication and control measures and movement restrictions in response to the outbreaks to prevent further spread of disease; and
- In each region, procedures used for repopulation of affected premises included monitoring to demonstrate that HPAI H5N1 had been eradicated from the premises.

Based on these factors, which are consistent with the OIE's recommendations for reinstatement for trade with a country that has experienced an HPAI H5N1 outbreak,²

¹ To view the list of regions APHIS considers to be affected with HPAI H5N1, go to (http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/animal_import/animal_imports_hpai.shtml).

² OIE (2008). Risk Analysis. In, *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*, 17th edition. Paris, World Organization for Animal Health: Chapter 2.2 on Import Risk Analysis; Chapter 10.4 on Avian Influenza. To view the document on the Internet, go to (http://www.oie.int/eng/normes/mcode/A_summry.htm?e1d11).

our evaluations concluded that the Czech Republic and Sweden were able to effectively control and eradicate HPAI H5N1 in their respective poultry populations and that the Czech and Swedish authorities have adequate control measures in place to rapidly identify, control, and eradicate the disease should it be reintroduced into their respective countries in either wild birds or domestic poultry. We further concluded that the importation of live birds, poultry carcasses, parts of carcasses, and eggs (other than hatching eggs) of poultry, game birds, or other birds from regions of the Czech Republic and Sweden presents a low risk of introducing HPAI H5N1 into the United States.

We are making the evaluation available for public comment. We will consider all comments that we receive on or before the date listed under the heading **DATES** at the beginning of this notice.

If, after the close of the comment period, APHIS can identify no additional risk factors that would indicate that domestic poultry in regions of the Czech Republic or Sweden continue to be affected with HPAI H5N1, we will remove from the list of regions affected by HPAI H5N1 those regions of the Czech Republic and Sweden that are currently on the list.

The evaluation may be viewed on the Regulations.gov Web site or in our reading room (see **ADDRESSES** above for a link to Regulations.gov and information on the location and hours of the reading room). You may request paper copies of the evaluation by calling or writing to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Please refer to the title of the evaluation when requesting copies.

Done in Washington, DC, this 31st day of March 2010.

Gregory Parham

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 2010-7734 Filed 4-5-10; 12:01 pm]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-S

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) to Invite Applications for the American Indian and Alaska Native Credit Outreach Initiative

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is requesting applications for

competitive cooperative agreement funds for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 for the credit outreach initiative targeted to American Indian and Alaska Native farmers, ranchers, and youth residing primarily on Indian reservations within the contiguous United States and in Alaska. There is \$400,000 available in funding for the remainder of FY 2010. FSA will make one award to a successful applicant through a cooperative agreement. FSA requests proposals from eligible nonprofit organizations, land-grant institutions, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments interested in a competitively-awarded cooperative agreement to create and implement a mechanism that will provide credit outreach and promotion, pre-loan education, and one-on-one loan application preparation assistance to American Indian and Alaska Native farmers, ranchers, and youth. Successful proposals may include other innovative services intended to enhance participation by American Indians and Alaska Natives in specific FSA Agricultural Credit Programs and other relevant credit programs available to American Indian and Alaska Native producers.

DATES: Applications must be completed and submitted to the Agency no later than 5 p.m. eastern time May 6, 2010. Late applications will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant. Applicants must ensure that the service used to deliver the application can do so by the deadline. Due to security concerns, packages sent to the Agency by mail have been delayed several days or even weeks.

ADDRESSES: Submit applications and other required materials by mail to: Mark Palmer, Director, Office of External Affairs, FSA, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), STOP 0505, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0511.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: *For FSA Office of External Affairs or Office of Outreach:* Mark Palmer, (202) 720-9933; email: mark.palmer@wdc.usda.gov.

For USDA Office of Tribal Relations: Janie Hipp, (202) 205-2249; e-mail: janie.hipp@osec.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose of Solicitation

This NOFA is being re-released because there was insufficient response to the NOFA published on August 27, 2009 (74 FR 43665-43669). This NOFA has been adjusted to reflect

improvements in the American Indian Credit Outreach Initiative Program that ensures it better serves American Indian and Alaska Native producers. Most notable among these improvements is the fact that FSA will now administer the program with advice from USDA Office of Tribal Relations.

This solicitation is issued under 7 U.S.C. 2204b (b)(4), which authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into cooperative agreements to improve the coordination and effectiveness of Federal programs affecting rural areas. The principal objective of this cooperative agreement is to continue a national outreach program that enables American Indian and Alaska Native farmers, ranchers, and youth located either on Indian reservations or in other regions that have a significant presence of American Indian and Alaska Native farmers, ranchers, and youth in the contiguous United States and Alaska to understand and have access to the various FSA Agriculture Credit Programs.

The USDA Office of Tribal Relations will provide ongoing and concrete assistance and advice in program planning, delivery, and coordination; this will partially satisfy the "significant agency participation" requirement for the cooperative agreement. All program outcomes will be reported to FSA and the USDA Office of Tribal Relations.

Proposal Requirements

All proposed approaches must include a plan for how the project will have the following capabilities in place within three months after acceptance of award:

1. The demonstrated ability to deliver these credit outreach services. This should include demonstrated technical expertise, program familiarity, and technological capability, including the ability to use relevant software programs used for preparing farm business plans. This should also include demonstrated cultural sensitivity and a thorough understanding of the population targeted by the applicant, including a firm grasp of the unique credit challenges faced by the targeted population.

2. A strategic plan with concrete, actionable goals.

3. A tracking system with which to first, document the steps taken by the cooperator to realize these goals, and second, gauge the efficacy and impact of the program. Thus, the cooperator should be able to document, track, and report on their own internal activities, as well as their external results in the targeted population.