

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency (FSA)
OMB Number: 0560-0231
Minority Farm Register

Purpose:

This request for OMB review is to obtain approval on the revised FSA Information Collection Package (ICP) on Minority Farm Register. Authority for the collection is 7 U.S.C. 2279. The Register will be a client list for FSA and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) program outreach. Participation in the Register will be voluntary. By joining the Register, an individual will authorize release of collected information to other government entities, approved community-based outreach organizations, State and local governments and educational institutions that conduct outreach services targeted to separate minority and ethnic constituencies.

The Register will be established and maintained by FSA. However, release of client listings for USDA program outreach by non-USDA entities will be coordinated with FSA by the USDA Office of Outreach.

Terms of Clearance:

FSA has eliminated the collection of the Social Security number from the form. A statement for allowing their names and other information provided on the form may be released to organizations other than USDA is included in the form. OMB agreed to remove the term of clearance to give registrants an opportunity to opt out of authorizing USDA Office of Outreach to provide their contact information to organizations outside of USDA.

Background

Section 10707 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171)(7 U.S.C. 2279(a)(4)(b)) is provided for inter-agency funding. In addition, FSA, seeing the potential of the Register as a valued outreach tool and in continued cooperation with the USDA Office of Outreach, agreed to create the Register as an FSA system of records.

The Register will promote program equity among minority farmers. Current FSA records contain racial and ethnic data for some program participants, but the Privacy Act prohibits release of this information to entities such as universities and community-based organizations even if the information will be used for USDA outreach efforts. The Register will not be subject to that constraint because releases of information will be authorized by each participant.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. CIRCUMSTANCES MAKING COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY:

Section 10707 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171) (2002 Farm Bill) (7 U.S.C. 2279) requires the Secretary to:

*“...carry out an outreach and technical assistance program to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers--
(A) in owning and operating farms and ranches; and
(B) in participating equitably in the full range of agricultural programs offered by the Department.”*

This information collection is necessary to create a client list for FSA and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) program outreach. The collected information is a tool to promote equal access to USDA Farm programs and services for minority farmers and ranchers with agricultural interests. These individuals may receive information or personal contact through USDA outreach efforts.

2. HOW, BY WHOM, AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE INFORMATION IS TO BE USED:

The Register will provide a name and address file of those interested in outreach efforts. Users will include the USDA Office of Outreach, community-based organizations, 1890 Land Grant Colleges, other minority-serving educational institutions, and USDA agencies offering new farmer and other assistance programs.

Individuals provide name, address, phone number, farm location, race, ethnicity and gender on the Minority Farm Register permission form. Names and addresses are the only required information. An individual only needs to sign up for the Register once. Every three years, FSA updates the files and provide members an opportunity to change their information. Members may also change their information or remove their names from the Register at any time.

FSA manages the Register and the USDA Office of Outreach releases names, addresses and phone numbers of individuals to approved outreach organizations requesting lists of individuals with particular racial and ethnic characteristics with their authorization.

Paper and electronic versions of Register materials are available in both English and Spanish. Informational registration materials are distributed to local, State and Federal community-based organizations, educational institutions and other groups serving minority clientele. Respondents submit forms electronically and by mail, fax or delivery to FSA.

3. USE OF IMPROVED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

The Minority Farm Register sign-up form is available through the USDA e-Forms web site. Individuals with an electronic access code will be able to submit the form electronically. Those who do not have a code will be able to obtain a copy of the form from a USDA office as well as on the internet. The on-line form can be filled out on-line and printed. These forms must be signed and submitted to an FSA office by mail or personal delivery.

4. EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION:

There is some duplication of the information collected with information already on file. Since the purpose of the collection is to obtain individuals' permission under the Privacy Act to release personal information, the specific information must be positively identified, and it is not possible to avoid some duplication. However, there will be opportunities to avoid some duplication. USDA outreach coordinators, small farm coordinators, and other USDA agency officials are comparing the list of registrants to their current customer contact lists to avoid duplicate efforts to reach producers.

5. METHODS TO MINIMIZE BURDEN OF SMALL BUSINESSES OR ENTITIES:

The reporting requirements are identical for all respondents and offer no greater burden for small entities. And, the requirements are already as minimal as possible since the collection only asks for the information for which permission to release under the Privacy Act is being sought.

6. CONSEQUENCE IF INFORMATION COLLECTION WERE LESS FREQUENT:

With the exception of updates to the information or requests to be removed from the Register, the information is only collected once.

7. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

There are no special circumstances for this information collection.

8. FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE AND CONSULTATION WITH PERSONS OUTSIDE THE AGENCY:

A Federal Register Notice requesting public comments on this information collection was published September 11, 2006 (71 FR 53362). The comment period ended November 13, 2006. No comments were received.

The following individuals were asked to comment specifically on the adequacy of the actual brochure that will be used to explain the Register and that will contain the form. They were asked to comment on the time required to read the brochure and complete and deliver the form

to the Service Center, which FSA originally estimated at 5 minutes. They estimated that completion time would be somewhat more than 5 minutes.

1. George W. Hall
Route 2, Box 163A
Boligee, Alabama 35443-9625
2. Charles Williams
110 Williams Road
Gainesville, Alabama 35464-2225
205-652-9816
3. Rod Beemer
74757 333 Ave
Imperial, NE 69033
308-882-5998
4. Mark Fuehrer
74302 329 Ave
Imperial NE 69033
308-882-4219

9. PAYMENTS OR GIFTS TO RESPONDENTS:

There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS:

Information collected is handled according to established FSA procedures implementing the Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act and OMB Circular A-130, "Responsibilities for Maintenance of Records About Individuals by Federal Agencies."

Individuals will be notified on the form itself and in all informational materials that their name and address information might be shared with groups conducting minority outreach efforts. The Privacy Act notice was published in the Federal Register specifically states the purposes for which the personal data will be released. A Privacy Act statement is included on the informational brochure.

11. QUESTIONS OF A SENSITIVE NATURE:

Individuals are asked to provide personal address, gender, racial and ethnic information.

12. ESTIMATES OF BURDEN:

See the attachment of FSA-85-1 on the estimated burden hours in this information collection.

The average hourly rate for the respondents is \$12.00. The respondent's annual cost burden associated with this information collection is \$56,004 (4,667 x \$12.00).

13. TOTAL ANNUAL COST BURDEN TO RESPONDENTS:

There is no annual cost burden to respondents.

14. ANNUALIZED COSTS TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

The total annual cost to the Federal Government for maintaining the Minority Farm Register is \$180,000. Explaining the Minority Farm Register program and customer service in FSA county offices will be performed by GS-5 level individuals and the program is expected to occupy one half of a staff year at the GS-14 level in the Office of Outreach and FSA combined each year.

Annual costs for each of the three years are estimated at \$50,000 for salaries and benefits, \$2,500 for processing, \$5,000 for printing and mailing, and \$2,500 miscellaneous.

15. REASONS FOR CHANGES IN BURDEN:

The burden was decreased to 29,558 hours. This was due to significantly lower interest in the Minority Farm Register than anticipated. Also, there were budget shortfalls in minority outreach funding which impacted on the number of respondents participating in the register. FSA estimated that an average of 5,000 people would register annually but fewer than 3,000 people registered from August 2004 through August 2006. If registration increases, FSA will request an increase in the burden hours.

16. TABULATION, ANALYSIS, AND PUBLICATION PLANS:

Minority Farm Register information is protected under the Privacy Act. No summary data or individual records will be published to the general public. When USDA agencies, community-based organizations, 1890 Land Grant Colleges, and other minority-serving educational institutions request information on the register, the USDA Office of Outreach will release a list of registrants and their contact information. The lists will include name, address, phone numbers, emails, farm location, race, gender, and ethnicity.

17. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF NON-DISPLAY OF EXPIRATION DATE:

There is no request for non-display of the expiration date.

18. EXCEPTIONS TO CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

19. HOW IS THIS INFORMATION COLLECTION RELATED TO THE CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER?

The form of AD-2035 is used to support the delivery of USDA programs, services and information by FSA, NRCS and RD service centers. The electronic AD-2035 is part of the customer's Internet, one-stop shopping experience. It is available on the Internet at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainservlet>.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

No statistical methods of collecting information will be employed in this information collection.