

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Ag-Discovery
0579-XXXX

A. Justification

August 2009

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs, established Special Emphasis Programs throughout the Federal Government. Special Emphasis Programs (SEPs) are an integral part of the overall civil rights, human resource and program delivery functions. The purpose of SEPs is to provide oversight, guidance, direction, enforcement and assistance to enhance opportunities for women, minorities, and people with disabilities in all employment and program delivery activities. Ag-Discovery is an outreach program designed to give students ages 12-17 an opportunity to learn about agriculture, the mission of APHIS, and about careers in various APHIS programs.

The objectives of the Ag-Discovery Program are to:

- Provide students an opportunity to live on a university campus while learning about APHIS programs including agricultural science through a series of workshops, labs and field trips. These activities are facilitated by subject matter experts including university and APHIS personnel.
- Identify and recruit students who are interested in agricultural science.
- Provide demonstrations in APHIS programs including veterinary medicine, animal science, and plant pathology.
- Increase awareness of career opportunities within APHIS.

Because of the program objectives, an application process is necessary to ensure that the students selected for the program are suitable candidates. The application process provides the information needed to assess the students' true interest in agriculture; provide references from others who are familiar with the students' interest and character; and provides verification of the students' age and enrollment in school.

2. Indicate how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The information, which is collected annually, will ultimately be used to select the participants for the various Ag-Discovery Programs. The application and brochure is provided to the applicant via the APHIS or University website. Applications are also distributed via hard copy through the local schools, person to person contact, or a community organization which has contacted APHIS or the University and requested copies of the application and brochure. The application process provides the needed information to rate and rank the applicants based on the following criteria. Each of the 3 areas is rated on a scale of 1 (low) – 10 (high).

The applicant may apply for each of the seven programs; however, it is estimated that the applicant will apply for up to three programs.

Ag-Discovery Application – APHIS Form 119

1) Submission of complete application package

- 1 Page Application
- Parental Release Form
- Student Contract and Photo Release Form
- Recommendation Letters
- Medical Information Form

2) Essay

- 2 pages in length
- Applicant must address the essay topic and related items as stated on the application
- Essay is also judged for neatness and organization

3) Three References

- 3 Letters of recommendation
- 1 letter from a counselor
- Letter addresses the students character, aptitude for learning and interest in agriculture

Panels of 3-5 members consisting of APHIS employees and University officials are assembled to review and rate the applications. Once the review and rating process is complete the information is forwarded to the Ag-Discovery Program Managers to be tallied and ranked. The top 16 students for each location are selected and notified by phone and mail.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

APHIS Form 119 and the brochure can be obtained at the following website: www.aphis.usda.gov/agdiscovery. However, the form can not be submitted electronically; it must be mailed to the address provided on the application. Hard copies of the application are also available upon request.

An electronic version of the application is available to ensure that APHIS is able to reach the largest possible target audience. Electronic accessibility also supports the Federal Government's paper reduction initiative and reduces the cost burden to the Government associated with labor and materials required to produce and distribute copies of the application. However, hard copies are available upon request for those who do not have access to a computer.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purpose described in item 2 above.

The Ag-Discovery program is unique to APHIS and the information APHIS collects in connection with this program is not available from any other source.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The information collected for the Ag-Discovery Program does not impact small businesses or other small entities.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

If the information were collected less frequently or not collected at all, it would significantly hinder APHIS' ability to ensure that students applying for the program are eligible. Also, without the data, the ability of APHIS to partner with the University would be greatly diminished and the opportunity for APHIS and the University to teach students about agriculture would be eliminated.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information collection guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

The information collection is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines established in 5 CFR 1320.5.

8. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting form, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB.

In 2008 APHIS engaged in productive consultations with the following individuals concerning the information collection requirements associated with this program:

Dr. Leon Slaughter
University of Maryland
Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
College Park, MD 20742
301-405-2078

Dr. Robert Stricklin
University of Maryland
Assistant Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
College Park, MD 20742
301-405-7761

Dr. Ray Mobley
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
Room 202-G Perry Paige Building
Tallahassee, FL 32307
850-412-5252

On Tuesday, March 10, 2009, page 10221, APHIS published in the Federal Register, a 60-day notice seeking public comments on its plans to request a 3-year approval of this collection of information. No comments from the public were received.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than reenumeration of contractors or grantees.

This information collection activity involves no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No additional assurance of confidentiality is provided with this information collection. However, the confidentiality of information is protected under 5 U.S.C. 552a.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

This information collection activity will ask no questions of a personal or sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

See APHIS Form 71. Burden estimates were developed from discussions with APHIS program participants who provide funding for programs, and with partnering university officials.

•Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.

The respondents are full time students between the ages of 12 to 17. APHIS estimates the annualized cost to these respondents to be \$24,759. See chart below:

Number of Respondents – 210 x 3 responses per respondent= 630 annual responses

Time per response – 6 hrs x 630 responses= 3,780 hours

Average hourly pay – \$6.55 x 3,780 hours = \$24,759

\$ 6.55 is the hourly rate derived from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics May 2008 Report - Occupational Employment and Wages in the United States. See

<http://www.bls.gov/oes/>

13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.

There is zero annual cost burden associated with capital and start-up costs, operation and maintenance expenditures, and purchase of services.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The annualized cost to the Federal government is estimated at \$12,131.72. (See APHIS Form 79.)

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-1.

This is a new program.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

APHIS has no plans to publish information it collects in connection with this program.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

APHIS will include the expiration date on its form.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in the "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act."

APHIS can certify compliance with all provisions of the Act.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

Statistical methods are not employed in this information collection activity.