

**2009 SUPPORTING STATEMENT**  
**for**  
**Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**  
**OMB NO. 0581-0239**

**A. Justification.**

**1. EXPLAIN THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAKE THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY. IDENTIFY ANY LEGAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS THAT NECESSITATE THE COLLECTION.**

The information collection requirements in this request are needed for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP), which operates pursuant to the authority of Section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 USC 1621 note). Section 101 directs the Secretary of Agriculture to “make grants to States for each of the fiscal years 2005 through 2009 to be used by State Departments of Agriculture solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.”

The program was appropriated funding in fiscal years 2006 through 2008. These grant funds were previously applied for and awarded to eligible State departments of agriculture. Therefore, State departments of agriculture can no longer apply for grants under the program. However, the program is still in effect because grant periods can be up to three years in length and currently, State departments of agriculture are reporting on previously awarded grants. Since State departments of agriculture can no longer apply for grants under the program, the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance, SF-424B Assurance-Non-Construction, State Plan (Narrative), and Grant Agreement reporting requirements are no longer required. Currently, State departments of agriculture are still reporting on their grants. They are still required to submit annual and final performance reports, requests for grant amendments, a financial status report, and an audit report so that AMS can certify that grant participants are complying with applicable program regulations.

The SCBGP mission is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. The program was funded for \$7 million in fiscal year 2006, \$6.89 million in 2007, and \$8.4 million in 2008.

Each State that applied for the Program received \$100,000 to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. In addition, each State received an amount representing the proportion of the value of specialty crop production in the State. All fifty States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico were eligible to participate.

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is reviewing annual and final performance reports, grant amendments, and financial status reports for the SCBGP. The SCBGP is executed in accordance with applicable parts of USDA's Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations (7 CFR 3015 et seq).

**2. INDICATE HOW, BY WHOM, 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.**

An Annual Performance Report is required within 90 days after the completion of the first year of the grant period and once within 90 days after the second year of the grant period. The Annual Performance Report will be collected electronically or by fax or mail. The Annual Performance Report should include:

- Activities Performed
- Problems and Delays
- Future Project Plans
- Funding Expended to Date

A Final Performance Report is required once 90 days after expiration of the grant period. This information will be used by AMS to certify that grant participants are complying with applicable program regulations. The Final Performance Report will be collected electronically or by fax or mail. The Final Performance Report should include:

- Project Summary
- Project Approach
- Goals and Outcomes Achieved
- Lessons Learned
- Contact Person
- Additional information

A Request for Grant Amendment submitted by the State department of agriculture is required if there is a change in key personnel, scope or objectives of the grant, extension of the grant agreement, and/or budget changes that exceed more than 20% of a project's total budget. We anticipate approximately 50% of the State departments of agriculture will submit grant amendments. This information will be collected electronically.

Standard form 269A, Financial Status Report (Short form) approved under OMB #0348-0038, or Standard form 269A, Financial Status Report (Long form) (if the project had program income) approved under OMB #0348-0039 (rarely used), is

completed once by the State department of agriculture 90 days after the expiration date of the grant period. The information will be used by AMS to determine the final financial status of the State's grant projects. The information can be obtained electronically and collected by fax or email.

An Audit Report is required to be submitted to AMS by the State no later than 30 days after completion of an audit on all grant expenditures. This information will be used by AMS to certify that grant participants are complying with applicable program regulations. The audit report will be collected electronically or by fax or 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.**

SF 269, SF 269A, can be obtained at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants\\_forms.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants_forms.html) electronically. The forms can be filled out on-line and then faxed or emailed in.

The Annual Performance Report, Final Performance Report, Request for Grant Amendment and Audit Report can be submitted electronically.

- 4. DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION. SHOW SPECIFICALLY WHY ANY SIMILAR INFORMATION ALREADY AVAILABLE CANNOT BE USED OR MODIFIED FOR USE FOR THE PURPOSE(S) DESCRIBED IN ITEM 2 ABOVE.**

This program is not maintained by any other agency; therefore, the requested information will not be available from any other existing records.

- 5. IF THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION IMPACTS SMALL BUSINESSES OR OTHER SMALL ENTITIES (ITEMS 5 OF THE OMB FORM 83-1), DESCRIBE THE METHODS USED TO MINIMIZE BURDEN.**

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program's purpose is to provide grants to States. The collection of information will not have an adverse impact on small businesses or other small entities.

- 6. DESCRIBE THE CONSEQUENCE OF 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.**

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program's purpose is to provide grants to States. Without this collection of information the Agency would not be able to monitor compliance with Section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004, regulations including USDA's Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations (7 CFR 3015 et seq), and administration procedures of the program.

**7. EXPLAIN ANY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WOULD CAUSE AN INFORMATION COLLECTION TO BE CONDUCTED IN A MANNER:**

- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO REPORT INFORMATION TO THE AGENCY MORE OFTEN THAN QUARTERLY;**

Respondents are not required to report more than quarterly.

- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO PREPARE A WRITTEN RESPONSE TO A COLLECTION OF INFORMATION IN FEWER THAN 30 DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF IT;**

Respondents are not required to prepare a written response to a collection of information fewer than 30 days after receipt.

- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO SUBMIT MORE THAN AN ORIGINAL AND TWO COPIES OF ANY DOCUMENT;**

Respondents are not required to submit more than an original and two copies of any document.

- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO RETAIN RECORDS, OTHER THAN HEALTH, MEDICAL, GOVERNMENT CONTRACT, GRANT-IN-AID, OR TAX RECORDS FOR MORE THAN 3 YEARS;**

Respondents are not required to retain any records for more than 3 years. This is part of normal business practice.

- **IN CONNECTION WITH A STATISTICAL SURVEY, THAT IS NOT DESIGNED TO PRODUCE VALID AND RELIABLE RESULTS THAT CAN BE GENERALIZED TO THE UNIVERSE OF STUDY;**

The information collected will not be utilized in connection with a statistical survey.

- **REQUIRING THE USE OF A STATISTICAL DATA CLASSIFICATION THAT HAS NOT BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY OMB;**

There is no requirement for a statistical data classification.

- **THAT INCLUDES A PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY THAT IS NOT SUPPORTED BY AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED IN STATUE OR REGULATION, THAT IS NOT SUPPORTED BY DISCLOSURE AND DATA SECURITY POLICIES THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE PLEDGE, OR WHICH UNNECESSARILY IMPEDES SHARING OF DATA WITH OTHER AGENCIES FOR COMPATIBLE CONFIDENTIAL USE; OR**

No confidential information is collected.

- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO SUBMIT PROPRIETARY TRADE SECRET, OR OTHER CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION UNLESS THE AGENCY CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT IT HAS INSTITUTED PROCEDURES TO PROTECT THE INFORMATION'S CONFIDENTIALITY TO THE EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW.**

Respondents are not required to submit proprietary trade secrets or other confidential information.

8. **IF APPLICABLE, PROVIDE A COPY AND IDENTIFY THE DATE AND PAGE NUMBER OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER OF THE AGENCY'S NOTICE, REQUIRED BY 5 CFR 1320.8(d), SOLICITING COMMENTS ON THE INFORMATION COLLECTION PRIOR TO SUBMISSION TO OMB. SUMMARIZE PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO THAT NOTICE AND DESCRIBE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE AGENCY IN RESPONSE TO THESE COMMENTS. SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS COMMENTS RECEIVED ON COST AND HOUR BURDEN.**

The 60-day notice for public comment on the renewal information collection was published in the Federal Register on May 22, 2009 (74 FR pg. 23986). No comments were received.

**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 FORMAT (IF ANY), AND ON THE DATA ELEMENTS TO BE RECORDED, DISCLOSED, OR REPORTED.**

The SCBGP Project Manager attends the annual meeting of the North American Agricultural Marketing Officials, a group whose members consist of the marketing directors of the State agriculture departments. These directors are very often the project managers for SCBGP projects. These issues may be discussed informally at such meetings and in telephone conversations with grantees as they carry out their projects. In addition, consultation with specialty crop industry members, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), and the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association (UFFVA) occurred to discuss the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

**CONSULTATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THOSE FROM WHOM INFORMATION IS TO BE OBTAINED OR THOSE WHO MUST COMPILE RECORDS SHOULD OCCUR AT LEAST ONCE EVERY 3 YEARS – EVEN IF THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION ACTIVITY IS THE SAME AS IN PRIOR PERIODS. THERE MAY BE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAY PRECLUDE CONSULTATION IN A SPECIFIC SITUATION. THESE CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD BE EXPLAINED.**

Kathy Alameda, California Department of Food and Agriculture, (916) 651-9888

Carole Strange, Florida Department of Agriculture, (850) 410-6723

Industry member: Ms. Diane Coates, U.S. Apple Association, Director of Public Affairs, 8233 Old Courthouse Road, Suite 200, Vienna, VA 22182-3816, telephone: (703) 442-8850.

UFFVA: Robert Guenther, Vice President, Government & Public Affairs, 1901 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 2006, telephone: (202) 303-3400.

NASDA: Amy Mann, Director, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, 1156 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 1020, Washington, DC 20005-1711, telephone: **(202) 296-9680.**

**9. EXPLAIN ANY DECISION TO PROVIDE ANY PAYMENT OR GIFT TO RESPONDENTS, OTHER THAN REMUNERATION OF CONTRACTORS OR GRANTEES.**

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents, other than remuneration of grantees.

**10. DESCRIBE ANY ASSURANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS AND THE BASIS FOR THE ASSURANCE IN STATUTE, REGULATION, OR AGENCY POLICY.**

SCBGP does not request confidential information from respondents and therefore provides no assurances related to confidentiality.

11. **PROVIDE ADDITIONAL JUSTIFICATION FOR ANY QUESTIONS OF A SENSITIVE NATURE, SUCH AS SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUTDES, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, AND OTHER MATTERS THAT 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.**

Questions of a sensitive nature are not found in this information collection.

12. **PROVIDE ESTIMATES OF THE HOUR BURDEN OF THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.**

**THE STATEMENT SHOULD:**

- **INDICATE THE NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS, FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE, ANNUAL HOUR BURDEN, AND AN EXPLANATION OF HOW THE BURDEN WAS ESTIMATED. UNLESS DIRECTED TO DO SO, AGENCIES SHOULD NOT CONDUCT SPECIAL SURVEYS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON WHICH TO BASE HOUR BURDEN ESTIMATES. CONSULTATION WITH A SAMPLE (FEWER THAN 10) OF POTENTIAL RESPONDENTS IS DESIRABLE. IF THE HOUR BURDEN ON RESPONDENTS IS EXPECTED TO VARY WIDELY BECAUSE OF DIFFERENCE IN ACTIVITY, SIZE, OR COMPLEXITY, SHOW THE RANGE OF ESTIMATED HOUR BURDEN, AND EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR THE VARIANCE. GENERALLY, ESTIMATES SHOULD NOT INCLUDE BURDEN HOURS FOR CUSTOMARY AND USUAL BUSINESS PRACTICES.**

The public reporting burden for approximately 52 respondents (1 response per State, Puerto Rico, and District of Columbia) providing up to 285 annual responses is estimated to be 5.48 responses per respondent. It is estimated that a total of 351 hours per year will be required for the 52 respondents to complete the 285 responses, averaging approximately 1.23 hours per response. The complete public reporting burden is summarized on AMS-71.

- **IF THIS REQUEST FOR APPROVAL COVERS MORE THAN ONE FORM, PROVIDE SEPARATE HOUR BURDEN ESTIMATES FOR**

**EACH FORM AND AGGREGATE THE HOUR BURDENS IN ITEM 13 OF OMB FORM 83-I.**

See AMS 71 for breakouts.

- **PROVIDE ESTIMATES OF ANNUALIZED COST TO RESPONDENTS FOR THE HOUR BURDENS FOR COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION, IDENTIFYING AND USING APPROPRIATE WAGE RATE CATEGORIES.**

The respondents estimated annual cost in providing information to the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is \$9,048. This total has been estimated by multiplying 351 total burden hours by \$25.78, an average of mean hourly earnings by state and local government white collar (excluding sales) employees. Data for computation of this hourly wage were obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor Statistic's publication "National Compensation Survey: Occupational Wages in the United States, June 2005", published August 2006 (Bulletin 2581). This publication can also be found at the following website:

<http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ocs/sp/ncbl0832.pdf>.

**13. PROVIDE AN ESTIMATE 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 ESTIMATE 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. THE ESTIMATES SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH GENERATING, MAINTAINING AND DISCLOSING OR PROVIDING THE INFORMATION. INCLUDE DESCRIPTIONS OF METHODS USED TO ESTIMATE MAJOR COST FACTORS INCLUDING SYSTEM AND TECHNOLOGY ACQUISITION, EXPECTED USEFUL LIFE OF CAPITAL EQUIPMENT, THE DISCOUNT RATE(S), AND THE TIME PERIOD OVER WHICH COSTS WILL BE INCURRED. CAPITAL AND START-UP COSTS INCLUDE, AMONG OTHER ITEMS, PREPARATIONS FOR COLLECTING INFORMATION SUCH AS PURCHASING COMPUTERS AND SOFTWARE, MONITORING, SAMPLING, DRILLING AND TESTING EQUIPMENT; AND RECORD STORAGE FACILITIES.**



- **IF COST ESTIMATES ARE EXPECTED TO VARY WIDELY, AGENCIES SHOULD PRESENT RANGES OF COST BURDENTS AND EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR THE VARIANCE. THE COST OF PURCHASING OR CONTRACTING OUT INFORMATION COLLECTION SERVICES SHOULD BE A PART OF THIS COST BURDEN ESTIMATE. IN DEVELOPING COST BURDEN ESTIMATES, AGENCIES MAY CONSULT WITH A SAMPLE OF RESPONDENTS (FEWER THAN 10), UTILIZE THE 60-DAY PRE-OMB SUBMISSION PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS AND USE EXISTING ECONOMIC OR REGULATORY IMPACT ANALYSIS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RULEMAKING CONTAINING THE INFORMATION COLLECTION, AS APPROPRIATE.**
  
- **GENERALLY, ESTIMATES SHOULD NOT INCLUDE PURCHASES OF EQUIPMENT OR SERVICE, OR PORTIONS THEROF, MADE: (1) PRIOR TO OCTOBER 1, 1995, (2) TO ACHIEVE REGULATORY COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH THE INFORMATION COLLECTION, (3) FOR REASONS OTHER THAN TO PROVIDE INFORMATION OR KEEPING RECORDS FOR THE GOVERNMENT, OR (4) AS PART OF CUSTOMARY AND USUAL BUSINESS OR PRIVATE PRACTICES.**

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

**14. PROVIDE ESTIMATES OF ANNUALIZED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. ALSO, PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE METHOD USED TO ESTIMATE COST, WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE QUANTIFICATION OF HOURS, OPERATION EXPENSES (SUCH AS EQUIPMENT, OVERHEAD, PRINTING, AND SUPPORT STAFF), AND ANY OTHER EXPENSE THAT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN INCURRED WITHOUT THIS COLLECTION OF INFORMATION. AGENCIES ALSO MAY AGGREGATE COST ESTIMATES FROM ITEMS 12, 13, AND 14 IN A SINGLE TABLE.**

The estimated annual cost currently to operate SCBGP is (\$589,000) per year. The SCBGP office currently consists of one 3.5 full time employees who are responsible for all aspects of the grant program from pre-award to closeout. Grant program oversight and policy management is provided on a part time basis by one GS-15 manager. Administrative support is provided throughout the year on a part time basis by one GS-06 Administrative Office Assistant. The travel budget is for the employees to attend appropriate conferences, and conduct site visits to SCBGP projects. The Contracts/Services budget includes training for the employees to keep up-to-date with developments in Federal grants management and for special projects

such as website upgrades and financial sponsorship of conferences that compliment and further the agency mission as it relates to SCBGP. The remaining line items are for administrative expenses and overhead.

**Estimated Annual Cost to Federal Government of Operating SCBGP**

Salaries/Benefits/Awards	\$375,300
Travel	\$27,800
Contracts/Services	\$105,000
Printing/Copying/Mailing	\$3,000
Rent/Communication/Utilities	\$58,900
Supplies/Equipment	<u>\$19,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$589,000</b>

**15. EXPLAIN THE REASON FOR ANY PROGRAM CHANGES OR ADJUSTMENTS REPORTED IN ITEMS 13 OR 14 OF THE OMB FORM 83-I.**

There is a decrease of 148 burden hours.

The program was appropriated funding in fiscal years 2006 through 2008. These grant funds were previously applied for and awarded to eligible State departments of agriculture. Therefore, State departments of agriculture can no longer apply for grants under the program. However, the program is still in effect because grant periods can be up to three years in length and currently, State departments of agriculture are reporting on previously awarded grants.

Since State departments of agriculture can no longer apply for grants under the program, the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance, SF-424B Assurance-Non-Construction, State Plan (Narrative), and Grant Agreement reporting requirements are no longer required.

The Request for Grant Period Extension Letter was changed to Request for Grant Amendment due to AMS requiring that a written request be submitted for a change in key personnel, scope or objectives of the grant, a grant period extension and/or budget changes that exceed more than 20% of a project's total budget. The Request for Grant Period Extension only included a request for a grant period extension. Based on program history, AMS anticipates that approximately 50% of State departments of agriculture will submit a request for a grant amendment which is an increase in the number of respondents since the last submission. This program change is needed so that AMS can certify that grant funds are used responsibly.

Q-15 Grid gives a summary of the reason for the changes in the burden of information collection since the last submission.

- 16. FOR COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION WHOSE RESULTS WILL BE PUBLISHED, OUTLINE PLANS FOR TABULATION, AND PUBLICATION. ADDRESS ANY COMPLEX ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES THAT WILL BE USED. PROVIDE THE TIME SCHEDULE FOR THE ENTIRE PROJECT, INCLUDING BEGINNING AND ENDING DATES OF THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION COMPLETION OF REPORT, PUBLICATION DATES, AND OTHER ACTIONS.**

The collected information will not be published.

- 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.**

Each form currently contains an OMB number and an expiration date.

- 18. EXPLAIN EACH EXCEPTION TO THE CERTIFICATION STATEMENT IDENTIFIED IN ITEM 19, "CERTIFICATION FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSIONS," OF OMB FORM 83-I.**

The agency is able to certify compliance with all provisions under Item 19 of OMB Form 83-I.

**B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS.**

This information collection does not employ statistical methods.