

**Supporting Statement for Form SSA-7156  
Farm Self-Employment Questionnaire  
20 CFR 404.1082(c) & 20 CFR 404.1095  
OMB No. 0960-0061**

A. **Justification**

**1. Introduction/Authoring Laws and Regulations**

The Social Security Administration (SSA) collects the information on Form SSA-7156 to determine the existence of an agricultural trade or business. This determination of coverage may affect an individual's insured status for receipt of monthly benefits, or it may affect the amount of the monthly benefits. Section 211(a) of the *Social Security Act* states the existence of a trade or business is a prerequisite for determining whether an individual or partnership may have "net earnings from self-employment." 20 CFR 404.1095 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* further defines an agricultural trade or business and 20 CFR 404.1082(c) establishes the rules for farm rental income.

**2. Description of Collection**

SSA collects the information on the SSA-7156 to determine the existence of an agriculture trade or business that may affect the monthly benefit or insured status of the applicant. Section 211(a) of the *Social Security Act* requires the existence of a trade or business as a prerequisite for determining whether an individual or partnership may have net earnings from self-employment. When an applicant indicates self-employment as a farmer, the requesting Social Security field office uses Form SSA-7165 to elicit the information necessary to determine the existence of an agricultural trade or business and subsequent covered earnings for Social Security entitlement purposes. As part of that application process, we conduct a personal interview, either face-to-face or via telephone, to collect this information. The respondents are applicants for Social Security benefits, whose entitlement depends on whether the worker has covered earnings from self-employment as a farmer.

**3. Use of Information Technology to Collect the Information**

While SSA strives to allow the electronic submission of data as an alternative means of doing business with the public, we need to prioritize higher volume collections for electronic conversion before we work on the lower volume collections. Since this information collection falls below the 50,000 respondent threshold established by SSA's Government Paperwork Elimination plan, we prioritized the conversion of higher volume forms to electronic media. Additionally, SSA employees complete the form, not the respondents.

However, we made the SSA-7156 available as a print only PDF for use by Field Office employees to conduct interviews. Due to the nature of the form, respondents cannot initiate or download it.

**4. Why We Cannot Use Duplicate Information**

The nature of the information we are collecting and the manner in which we are collecting it preclude duplication. SSA does not use another collection instrument to collect similar data.

**5. Minimizing Burden on Small Respondents**

This collection of information does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

**6. Consequence of Not Collecting Information or Collecting it Less Frequently**

SSA only collects the information in cases where we need to determine the existence of a covered agricultural trade or business, because the earnings may affect the monthly benefit or insured status. If we collect this information less frequently, some claimants for benefits will be disadvantaged. There are no technical or legal obstacles that prevent burden reduction.

**7. Special Circumstances**

There are no special circumstances that would cause SSA to conduct this information collection in a manner inconsistent with *5 CFR 1320.5*.

**8. Solicitation of Public Comment and Other Consultations with the Public**

The 60-day advance Federal Register Notice published on December 8, 2009, at 74 FR 64801, and SSA received no public comments. The second Notice published on March 4, 2010, at 75 FR 9992. If we receive any comments in response to the 30-day Notice, we will forward them to OMB. SSA did not consult members of the public in the development of this form.

**9. Payment or Gifts to Respondents**

SSA does not provide payments or gifts to the respondents.

**10. Assurances of Confidentiality**

SSA protects and holds confidential the information it collects in accordance with *42 U.S.C. 1306*, *20 CFR 401* and *402*, *5 U.S.C. 552* (Freedom of Information Act), *5 U.S.C. 552a* (Privacy Act of 1974), and OMB Circular No. A-130.

**11. Justification for Sensitive Questions**

The information collection does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.

**12. Estimates of Public Reporting Burden**

Approximately 47,500 respondents take 10 minutes each to complete the SSA-7156 each year. Accordingly, the burden is 7,917 hours. This figure represents burden hours, and we did not calculate a separate cost burden.

**13. Annual Cost Burden to the Respondents (Other)**

The collection does not impose a known cost burden to the respondents.

**14. Annual Cost To Federal Government**

The annual cost to the Federal government is approximately \$80,000. This estimate is a projection of printing and distribution costs for the information collection.

**15. Program Changes or Adjustments to the Information Collection Request**

There are no changes to the public reporting burden.

**16. Plans for Publication Information Collection Results**

SSA will not publish the results of the information collection.

**17. Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date**

OMB granted SSA an exemption from the requirement to print the OMB expiration date on its program forms. SSA produces millions of public-use forms with life cycles exceeding those of an OMB approval. Since SSA does not periodically revise and reprint its public-use forms, (e.g., on an annual basis), OMB granted this exemption so SSA would not have to destroy stocks of otherwise usable forms with expired OMB approval dates, avoiding Government waste.

**18. Exception to Certification Statement**

SSA is not requesting an exception to the certification requirements at 5 *CFR* 1320.9 and related provisions at 5 *CFR* 1320.8(b)(3).

**B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

SSA does not use statistical methods for this information collection.