

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
PROCESSED PRODUCTS FAMILY OF FORMS
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0018**

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g. establishments, State and local governmental units, households, or persons) in the universe and the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form. The tabulation must also include expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted before, provide the actual response rate achieved.

The census of seafood processors is based on known firms that responded in previous years with the addition of newly established firms identified by local agency personnel. Agency personnel review local trade directories and state licensing agencies to develop potentially new contacts. New firms are provided a NOAA Form 88-13 survey form and instructions for completing the survey. Lists of firms that are reported to have ceased operation are reviewed to establish certainty that a new company has not opened up in the same location. There have been cases in which a firm ceased operation for a year due to raw supply sourcing only to reopen in a subsequent year. In recent years, no new firms have entered into the fish meal and oil processing sectors, so no additional 88-13c Forms have been required

2. Describe the procedures for the collection, including: the statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection; the estimation procedure; the degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification; any unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures; and any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

No statistical stratification is employed in the census.

The seasonality (four-five months) of the fisheries supporting the processing of meal and oil (NOAA Form 88-13) precludes reducing the reporting time frame to less than monthly. Companies reduce employment at season closure to primary maintenance needs. If the reporting time frame was reduced to an annual submission, a loss of data for the season would jeopardize the statistics.

3. Describe the methods used to maximize response rates and to deal with nonresponse. The accuracy and reliability of the information collected must be shown to be adequate for the intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided if they will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

Approximately 50 percent of the survey forms are returned within a month of the initial mailing conducted in January. A second mailing to non-respondents is conducted in late February with follow-up calls initiated within two weeks to provide plant managers the option of providing the information over the phone or to ascertain if there is a problem. In many cases the plant may not

have been operational due to the seasonality of a fishery.

Federally permitted dealers in the Northeast Region are required to submit a completed survey. See response to Question 1 of this Supporting Statement for more information on reporting requirements. The regional permit office notifies a firm that fails to respond that their permit renewal will be held in abeyance or if necessary an existing permit may be revoked.

Many of the processing facilities have a long-standing relationship with local NMFS personnel conducting the survey. When necessary, NMFS personnel may visit the plant to review a respondents' completed survey or to assist in completing the survey.

NMFS personnel work closely with national, regional, and state industry trade associations. Periodically, personnel hold discussions with industry leaders to describe the necessity of their members to provide the information. Personnel also meet with industry members at both local and national trade shows to review new types of products that are being developed for inclusion in the survey.

It is difficult to estimate the response rate to the 88-13, because it is a moving target – we rely on the agents in the field to keep us current on what businesses are out of business and when new businesses start up. For large-scale operations, our response rate should be quite high (80-90 percent). For the very small “mom and pop” operations, it is probably less. For the 88-13c the universe of meal processors is completely known and the response rate is 100%.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Tests are encouraged as effective means to refine collections, but if ten or more test respondents are involved OMB must give prior approval.

The census has been conducted in the same manner for the past twenty years. No test has been conducted recently.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design, and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

Regional agency personnel conduct the census. Personnel at headquarters conduct tabulations of the data. For questions concerning the survey, please contact Alan Lowther of the NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology at (301) 713-2328 or Alan.Lowther@noaa.gov.