

Foreign Agricultural Service

Supporting Statement - Exporter Assistance Programs

(0551-0031)

SUMMARY:

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this submission includes a request for a revision of a currently approved information collection in support of exporter assistance programs.

These FAS Exporter Assistance Programs are intended to help U.S. exporters develop and maintain markets overseas for hundreds of food and agricultural products, from bulk commodities to brand-name products. Companies wanting to export can participate in some or all programs – each of which offers a variety of methods of developing an export business.

The Exporter Assistance section of the FAS online (<http://www.fas.usda.gov>) is a one-stop-shop for both the experienced or novice exporter, offering information about export as well as providing easy access to register for these services. Customer evaluations will be sought in order to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of these services, which are intended to help U.S. companies to market and sell their products in overseas markets. Authority for this program falls under 7 U.S.C. 1761 and is voluntary for U.S. companies to participate.

TERMS OF CLEARANCE: On March 30, 2009, in accordance with 5 CFR 1320, OMB determined “with the exception of the surveys of Trade Show, American Café, and the Export Directory, the information collection is approved for three years”. In this information collection, FAS is submitting Part B for the Trade Show Evaluation Form, for OMB approval. The Export Directory Evaluation Form and the American Café Evaluation Form have been discontinued and will not be submitted in Part B, of this supporting statement, for OMB approval.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The Office of Trade Programs (OTP) provides vital services within the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It facilitates trade contacts between U.S. exporters and foreign buyers seeking U.S. food and agricultural products. All of the assistance offered is designed to promote U.S. agricultural exports by helping American exporters make contact with export agents, trading companies, importers, and foreign buyers, thus creating opportunities to sell their products in overseas markets. The specific programs covered by this request for OMB information collection authority are: U.S. Suppliers List, Trade Shows, Foreign Buyers List, Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies, and the Madigan Award.

Authority for these programs falls under 7 U.S.C. 1761, 7 U.S.C. 5693, 7 U.S.C. 1765b and is voluntary for U.S. companies to participate.

FAS collects data on two specific measures for the purpose of measuring program performance: (1) direct sales reported by U.S. participants at Trade Shows; and (2) direct sales reported by U.S. participants based on Exporter Assistance programs (Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies and Foreign Buyers List).

In the case of the Madigan Award, an award to organizations that significantly contribute to the advancement of U.S. agricultural exports, FAS collects information relevant to the nominations for this award. Authority for this award falls under 7 U.S.C. 5678 and is voluntary for entities to participate.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used.

Summary Table:

Program	How	Whom	What Purpose
U.S Suppliers' List	The U.S. Supplier list is an on-line searchable database by product including full contact information, email, web address, size of firm, type of firm, products and regions of the world. The U.S. Suppliers online database is hosted and maintained by the National Association of State Department of Agriculture (NASDA) in cooperation with FAS.	Used by FAS overseas offices and cooperators to respond to inquiries from importers asking for assistance to find a U.S exporter. Foreign importers and buyers can access the database with no access restrictions.	Facilitates contact between U.S. exporters and foreign buyers.
Foreign Buyers' List	The Foreign Buyers' List is a searchable database by country and product. Including full contact information and products. FAS overseas offices maintain and update their contacts in a consolidated database. U.S. exporters request lists from FAS at no cost.	Used by the FAS to provide lists to U.S. exporters seeking a list of foreign buyers.	Facilitates contact between U.S. exporters and foreign buyers
Trade Shows Evaluation Form	FAS partners with trade show organizers to offer U.S. companies exhibit space in a U.S.A. Agricultural or Food Pavilion. Companies who register for exhibit space are included in an exhibitor database.	Used by trade show organizers to targeted efforts in the recruitment process for trade show events. After the event is completed, participants complete an on-site evaluation at close of event.	Opportunity for U.S. companies to present their products to the buyer face to face, and to give FAS feedback on service.
Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies/Registration Form	Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies is an on-line searchable database containing full contact information, email and web addresses, size and type of firm, products, and export regions where U.S. suppliers can provide mixed containers of grocery and/or food service products.	FAS overseas offices provide this information to buyers looking for mixed container loads of grocery products. Exporters can register free of charge by submitting registration form available on FAS Online.	Facilitate contacts between U.S. exporters and foreign buyers.
Madigan Award	Public solicitation for nominations, followed by a formal application.	Used by USDA and review board to make awards.	Recognize exporters who have made significant contributions to the export of agricultural products.

Detailed Response:

U.S Suppliers List:

The main purpose of this program is to foster trade contacts in an effort to facilitate greater export of U.S. agriculture, food, forestry, and fishery products. The U.S. Suppliers List service is a searchable database containing U.S. firms, who are considered export ready and is used by FAS to specifically facilitate connecting U.S. exporters with overseas buyers. It contains 500 product

categories with companies listed multiple times. Companies can register to be listed at no cost at <http://fas1.agexportservices.org/apps/membership/register/mEnter3.asp>.

The database is primarily used by more than 80 USDA/FAS Overseas and Washington offices and to respond to inquiries from export agents, trading companies, importers, and foreign buyers to locate U.S. exporters. The information is provided directly to importers, foreign buyers, and interested parties in the United States for free via FAS online at http://www.fas.usda.gov/agx/partners_trade_leads/partners_trade_leads.asp. It is also used by FAS to recruit U.S. exporters to participate in market development activities sponsored by USDA and federal export programs. The ultimate use of the information is determined by the recipient. In most cases, the information is used by importers and foreign buyers to contact U.S. exporters.

The U.S. Suppliers online database is hosted and maintained by the National Association of State Department of Agriculture (NASDA) in cooperation with FAS.

Foreign Buyers List

The Foreign Buyers List is a database that allows FAS overseas posts to identify importers and distributors of agricultural products in their countries of responsibility. The information provided in this database is used to respond to U.S. exporters and FAS Partners/Cooperators inquiries of potential buyers of particular products.

Using a variety of sources including trade shows, events and incoming inquiries, etc., FAS overseas offices collect basic contact information and products of interest from foreign buyers. FAS overseas offices verify the quality and reliability of the contact before this information is uploaded to an online database.

U.S. exporters can order these lists for free. The order form may be downloaded from FAS Online at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/forbuy.html>. The company submits the form via fax or email. The Foreign Buyers' Lists are then sent to the exporter via email. U.S. exporters use these lists to contact foreign buyers and promote their U.S. agricultural and food products and increase their company sales.

Trade Shows – Evaluation Form

Information is collected from each exhibitor at all FAS endorsed shows and is given to the trade show coordinator, the organizer, and overseas offices. The information collected from the evaluation form is used to measure the performance of shows.

Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies/Registration Form

The *Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies* is a list of U.S. exporters capable of providing mixed containers of grocery and/or food service products to foreign buyers. This is particularly important in emerging markets that are unable to support large shipments of a single product. The purpose of the *Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies* is to provide information of U.S. exporters that are capable of handling mixed container to smaller emerging or niche markets.

FAS recruits for the directory via partners and cooperators, FAS online (where the registration form is available at

www.fas.usda.gov/agx/partners_trade_leads/ExportDirectoryRegistrationForm.pdf, and other events such as Trade Shows.

The *Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies* is available to the general public, specifically foreign buyers seeking U.S. products, via FAS online at <http://usdistributors.agexportservices.org/Apps/StoreFronts/search.asp>.

Madigan Award

The information is collected to be used by the Madigan Award Selection Committee to determine awardees.

The Edward R. Madigan United States Agricultural Export Excellence Award was established by Congress in the Federal Improvement and Reform (FAIR) Act of 1996. The award commemorates Edward R. Madigan who, as a congressman from Illinois and later as Secretary of Agriculture, played a major role in reshaping U.S. agricultural policy to enable farmers and ranchers to respond more effectively to market signals and pursue export opportunities.

The Madigan Award is designed to help increase U.S. agricultural exports by:

- identifying efforts of U.S. entities to develop and expand markets through new products and services and innovative marketing techniques;
- recognizing achievements of those who have demonstrated or supported entrepreneurial efforts to expand and create new markets for, or increase the value or volume of, agricultural exports; and,
- disseminating information on successful methods for developing and expanding markets for U.S. agricultural exports.

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.

Detailed Response:

U.S. Suppliers List

The U.S. Suppliers' List is an online database available to the general public from FAS online at <http://fas1.agexportservices.org/Apps/StoreFronts/search.asp>.

U.S. Exporters of agricultural products can register on-line to be included in the U.S. Suppliers List. The form is available from FAS online at <http://fas1.agexportservices.org/apps/logon3.asp>.

Foreign Buyers List

The Foreign Buyers' Lists are maintained via an online database by FAS overseas offices.

The U.S. exporters can order these lists at no cost. The order form may be downloaded from FAS online at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/fblists.pdf>. The exporter submits the form via fax or email.

Trade Show – Evaluation Form

The collection of trade show evaluation information is not supported by automated or electronic means or other forms of information technology. The information is collected from U.S. exhibitors at FAS endorsed trade shows by FAS staff via paper surveys.

Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies – Registration Form

The registration form for the *Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies* is available via FAS online at http://www.fas.usda.gov/agx/partners_trade_leads/partners_trade_leads.asp and can be accepted by email or fax.

The Directory is also available on FAS online at http://www.fas.usda.gov/agx/partners_trade_leads/partners_trade_leads.asp

Madigan Award

Applicants submit their applications via fax or mail. The requirement of signatures prevents the files from being e-mailed.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

Similar registration forms are needed for our services as U.S. exporters use Exporter Assistance Programs on an “a la carte” basis. In other words, users may participate in all, some, or none of our services. The burden is minimized by having separate forms for each. For example, the information collected from an exporter to register for the U.S. Suppliers List is less than what is required to register for the U.S Export Directory. FAS has a cooperative agreement with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) which has consolidated data into one comprehensive database of exporters and importers. Basic information is entered once, thereby avoiding repetitive entries in separate forms.

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

The registration and evaluations forms have been designed to be effortlessly and are quickly completed by respondents. Approximated 17% of the participants are small entities. The volume of information requested is minimal, and the forms can be completed without excessive research or review of company records.

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.

FAS would not be able to operate these programs, *at all*, if the information is not collected, as its sole reason for existence is exchange of exporter/importer information. Absent any follow-up evaluation, there would be *no* information available to gauge whether U.S. exporters are

negotiating sales with foreign buyers as a result of these programs. Collecting information less frequently would negatively impact our trade expansion performance objectives.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner 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.

Proprietary information may be provided by U.S. exporters on a voluntary basis and is only used for internal processing and analyses.

8. Federal Register Notice and consultations with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the Information Collection.

On December 23, 2011, FAS published (76 FR 80329) a notice soliciting comments on the "Request for Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection". No comments were received as a result of this notice.

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 of this information collection.

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

The trade show evaluation form used to solicit individual/company information for these programs includes several questions aimed at determining program effectiveness and measuring performance. Prior to asking these questions, the evaluation form provides the respondent with an assurance of confidentiality and a guarantee that proprietary information will not be released or used for any other purpose. This assurance falls under regulations regarding release of information in 2 FASR 11.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

Across all of these export assistance programs, respondents to performance measure evaluations are asked questions pertaining to the ethnicity/race or size of ownership of the company. The inclusion of this information yields data so program managers can better understand participation in regards to race/ethnicity and company size.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

The estimated number of respondents is 1,500 and the estimated annual burden is 693 hours. The estimated total reporting burden is 5,917 hours.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.

The annual cost across all participants is \$32,583 (based on an estimated hourly wage of \$47 per hour).

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government.

The annualized cost to the Federal government is estimated at \$20,371.

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

Our previous OMB submission (March 2009) showed an overall annual burden of 3,632 hours. The current burden is reduced to 693 hours, a reduction of 2,831 hours, due to the reduction in the numbers of forms submitted by participants. The number of respondents decreased from 31,910 to 1,500, a decrease of 30,410. The number of responses has decreased from 30,680 to 5,917, a reduction of 24,763 responses. This is due to a number of forms being discontinued under this information collection that are now being performed in the private sector. Under the new model, FAS is letting the private sector do what they do best, and engage only where there is value added with Government support as needed.

The following table summarizes changes resulting in reduced burden hours reported on OMB Form 83-I:

Service	Changes
U.S. Suppliers' List	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Minor change to reflect new FAS organizational structure and contact information.
Foreign Buyers' List	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Changed to reflect the new FAS organizational structure and simplify the form structure.
Trade Shows Evaluation Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Trade Show Evaluation form is being revised to capture information in a more concise manner and to reflect the new FAS organizational structure.
Madigan Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Minor change to reflect new FAS organizational structure and contact information.
Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies – Registration Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Minor change to reflect new FAS organizational structure and contact information.
Foreign Buyer Registration Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o This form has been discontinued.
Exporter Directory Evaluation Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o This form has been discontinued.
Registration/Application and Evaluation Forms for the American Cafe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o This form has been discontinued.
Sample Registration Form for Trade Events/American Cafe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o This form has been discontinued.

16. For Collection of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation, and publication.

Publication of participant information for Trade Shows is done on a case by case basis as, needed. Generally, the U.S. exporters' information is aggregated for presentations (i.e. exhibitor directory, exporter profiles, etc.) to foreign buyers participating in the event.

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.

Approval is not being sought to not display the expiration date for OMB approval.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB Form 83-I.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.