

B. COLLECTION 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 government unites, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.**

In fiscal year 2009, FGIS surveyed electronically a representative sample of paying customers of FGIS and the official inspection, grading, and weighing programs in accordance with Executive Order 12862. Survey questions were based on the following factors identified previously by customers as being critical to the official system's success: timeliness, cost-effectiveness, accuracy and consistency, usefulness of services and results, and professionalism of employees.

FGIS mailed surveys to 1,773 customers of the 43 private official agencies, 12 State agencies, and 5 FGIS field offices (*i.e.*, League City, TX; New Orleans, LA; Portland, OR; Stuttgart, AR; and Toledo, OH). Only 147 customers completed the surveys for response rate of 8% percent.

Based on this low response rate, FGIS determined a paper and electronic versions of the survey will be available within the approval period of this information collection. FGIS will also request official agencies and field offices to provide email addresses for their customers, if available.

For the 2009 survey, FGIS obtained current customer listings from each office and agency within the official grain inspection, grading, and weighing system. The revised master list containing around 9,000 customer names and addresses was input in an electronic searchable database. For subsequent surveys, FGIS will revise the current database and ask official agencies and field offices to update the master list of their customers if needed. FGIS will also request that official agencies and field offices provide email addresses for their customers, if available. Based on the number of email addresses collected, FGIS will determine if the customer survey should be administer by mail, e-mail or both

Since conducting its first survey in 1996, FGIS has strived to improve the survey's response rate to 50 percent or greater. To achieve that end, FGIS is collaborating with a statistician from FGIS' Technical Service Division (TSD) to provide statistically-based sampling procedures and data analysis. FGIS has determined that a representative sampling of approximately 1100 customers should be surveyed. To improve stratification estimates and ensure equal representation for all agencies and offices, FGIS will randomly select the same

proportion from each agency and field office. The following table represents the number of customers that will be surveyed for each FGIS field office, State official agency, and private official agency:

Number of Customers Per Office/Agency

Name of FGIS Export Office	No. of Customers
League City	27
New Orleans	26
Portland	8
Stuttgart	10
Toledo	40
Name of State Official Agency	No. of Customers
Alabama	1
Georgia	14
Louisiana	4
Missouri	36
Montana	1
North Carolina	1
North Dakota	338
South Carolina	1
Utah	5
Virginia	2
Washington	62
Wisconsin	1
Name of Private Official Agency	No. of Customers
Aberdeen	4
Amarillo	6
Barton	2
Cairo	6
Central Illinois	1
Central Iowa	21
Champaign	86
Columbus	9
Decatur	2
Detroit	2
East Indiana	2
Eastern Iowa	7
Enid	27
Farwell	4

Farwell Southwest	1
Frankfort	1
Fremont	4
Hastings	8
Idaho	21
Indianapolis	3
Jamestown	12
Kankakee	5
Kansas	218
Keokuk	1
Lewiston	1
Lincoln	7
McCrea	1
Michigan	2
Mid-Iowa	7
Midsouth	7
Minot	3
Northeast Indiana	2
Northern Plains	9
Ohio Valley	4
Omaha	1
Plainview	5
Schaal	9
Sioux City	18
Springfield	2
State Grain	5
Titus	2
Tri-State	3

FGIS aims to achieve a 55—57% percent response rate for the next surveys. By providing both an electronic and paper versions, FGIS anticipates a higher response rate than that achieved in 2009.

FGIS will also employ follow-up techniques such as reminder postcards to ensure a high response rate.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:

- **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection;**
- **Estimation procedure;**
- **Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification;**
- **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and**

- **Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

As mentioned in the above response, FGIS determined that a representative sampling of approximately 1100 customers should be surveyed. To improve stratification estimates and ensure equal representation for all agencies and offices, FGIS will randomly select an equal percentage of customers from each agency and field office. The margin of error is anticipated to be plus or minus 3 percent.

Approximately 10 to 14 days after initial mailing of the survey forms, FGIS will mail reminder postcards signed by the FGIS Deputy Administrator to all surveyed customers. Approximately 21 to 28 days after the initial mailing of the survey forms and after assessing the response rate, FGIS will send a reminder letter with information about how to request a replacement survey. FGIS will code all survey forms in order to distinguish respondents from non-respondents; the coding information will be strictly for FGIS internal use and individual responses will remain confidential.

FGIS is seeking a 3-year renewal authority so that it can issue its customer survey over the 3-year period. With this policy, FGIS will be able to establish baselines for customer satisfaction and track progress for key factors. Depending on the survey results, FGIS will determine the manner in which to continue the surveying process as well as the type of OMB approval it will seek.

- 3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield “reliable” data that can be generalized to the universe studied.**

To improve stratification estimates and ensure equal representation for all agencies and offices, FGIS will randomly select an equal percentage of customers from each agency and field office. By having a current and accurate customer database, FGIS anticipates a higher response rate than that achieved in 2009. To further maximize the customer response rate, FGIS will follow-up with reminder postcards and a letter.

- 4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.**

While we are planning to conduct electronic surveys during the approval period of this information collection, no system has yet been designed for testing purposes.

- 5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on 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 of the agency.**

FGIS consulted with GIPSA TSD employee, Larry Freeze, Statistician (tel: 816-891-0453). Anthony Goodeman, Grain Marketing Specialist (202-720-0291) will oversee all aspects of the surveying process.