

April 2013

**Supporting Statement**  
**Importation of Female Squash Flowers from Israel**  
**Into the Continental United States**  
**Docket No. APHIS-2012-0078**  
**OMB No. 0579-0406**

**A. Justification**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.**

The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), is responsible for preventing plant diseases or insect pests from entering the United States, preventing the spread of pests and noxious weeds not widely distributed in the United States, and eradicating those imported pests when eradication is feasible. The Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7701, et seq.) authorizes the Department to carry out its mission.

Under the Plant Protection Act, the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to prohibit or restrict the importation, entry, or movement of plants and plant pests to prevent the introduction of plant pests into the United States or their dissemination within the United States.

The regulations in “Subpart-Fruits and Vegetables” (7 CFR 319.56 through 319.56-56, referred to below as the regulations) prohibit or restrict the importation of fruits and vegetables into the United States from certain parts of the world to prevent the introduction and dissemination of plant pests that are new to or not widely distributed within the United States.

APHIS’ final rule is amending the regulations governing the importation of fruits and vegetables to allow the importation of female squash flowers from Israel into the continental United States. As a condition of entry, female squash flowers from Israel will be subject to a systems approach that will include requirements for pest exclusion at the production site and fruit fly trapping and monitoring. The female squash flowers will also be required to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of Israel with an additional declaration that the female squash flowers have been inspected and found free of quarantine pests. This action will allow for the importation of female squash flowers from Israel into the continental United States while continuing to provide protection against the introduction of quarantine pests.

APHIS is asking OMB to approve its use of these information collection activities, for 3 years, associated with its efforts to prevent the spread of fruit flies and other plant pests from entering into the United States.

**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.**

APHIS uses the following information activities to allow the importation of female squash flowers from Israel into the continental United States.

**Production Site Registration - Business** - Production sites in which the female squash flowers are produced must be registered with the NPPO of Israel. Initial approval of production sites must be completed jointly by the NPPO of Israel and APHIS.

**Trapping Records (Recordkeeping) - Foreign Government** - The NPPO of Israel must set and maintain fruit fly traps with an APHIS-approved bait at a rate of one trap per hectare, with a minimum of one trap in each PES and one outside the entrance of each PES. The NPPO of Israel must check the traps every 7 days and maintain records of trap placement, trap maintenance, and captures of any fruit flies of concern. The NPPO must maintain trapping records and make the records available to APHIS upon request.

**Box Markings - Business** – Before being removed from the PES, harvested female squash flowers must be placed in field cartons or containers that are marked to show the official registration number of the production site.

**Phytosanitary Certificate) w/Additional Declaration – Foreign Government** - Each consignment of female squash flowers would have to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the NPPO of Israel with an additional declaration stating that the consignment has been inspected and found free of C. capitata, D. ciliatus, H. armigera, and S. dorsalis.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, 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 considerations of using information technology to reduce burden.**

APHIS has no control or influence over when foreign countries will automate their phytosanitary certificates.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use of the purpose described in item 2 above.**

The information APHIS collects is exclusive to its mission of preventing the spread of plant pests and is not available from any other source.

**5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

The information APHIS collects is the minimum needed to protect the United States from destructive plant pests while increasing the number and variety of fruits and vegetables that can be imported from other countries. APHIS has determined 100 percent of the respondents are small entities.

**6. Describe the consequences 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.**

Failing to collect this information will cripple APHIS' ability to ensure that female squash flowers from Israel are not carrying plant pests. If plant pests were introduced into the United States, growers would suffer millions of dollars in losses.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information collection guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.**

- **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**

The NPPO of Israel must check the traps every 7 days and maintain records of trap placement, trap maintenance, and captures of any fruit flies of concern.
- **requiring respondents 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 three years;**
- **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;**
- **requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute 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**
- **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.**

No other special circumstances exist that would require this collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information collection guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

**8. 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 form, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB.**

The following individuals were consulted during 2012-2013:

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APHIS' proposed rule (APHIS-2012-0078). was published in the Federal Register on Thursday, May 2, 2013, pages 25620-25623, with a 60-day comment period. During, that time, APHIS received two comments from interested members of the public, both of which are addressed in the final rule. The proposed rule is being adopted as a **final** rule without change.

One commenter supported the rule that will benefit Israel's farmers. The second commenter saw no public benefit for importing female squash flowers and thought that the risk to domestic agriculture was enormous. He thought that the rule would impose an additional cost on the United States government for enforcing compliance with the regulation. APHIS has determined that the measures outlined in the risk management document that accompanied the proposed rule are sufficient to mitigate the risk of pests being introduced into the United States as a result of the importation of female squash flowers from Israel. The National Plant Protection Organization

(NPPO) of Israel and APHIS will collaborate to ensure that growers and importers comply with the amended measures, as it does in other import programs.

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than reenumeration of contractors or grantees.**

This information collection activity involves no payments or gifts to respondents.

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

No additional assurance of confidentiality is provided with this information collection. Any and all information obtained in this collection shall not be disclosed except in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and others that are considered private. This justification 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.**

This information collection activity asks no questions of a personal or sensitive nature.

**12. Provide estimates of hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.**

**. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. 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 APHIS Form 71 for hour burden estimates.

**. Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.**

APHIS estimates the total annualized cost to the respondents to be \$11,900. APHIS arrived at this figure by multiplying the total burden hours (476) by the estimated average hourly wage of the above respondents (\$25.00).  $476 \times \$25 = \$11,900$

The estimated wage rate was developed by using historical data through discussions with importers from Israel and APHIS' International Services.

**13. Provide estimates 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 in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates 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.**

There is zero annual cost burden associated with the capital and start-up cost, maintenance costs, and purchase of services in connection with this program.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

The estimated cost for the Federal Government is \$829. (See APHIS Form 79.)

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB 83-1.**

This is a new program. APHIS is amending the fruits and vegetables regulations to allow the importation of female squash flowers from Israel into the United States subject to a systems approach.

**16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.**

APHIS has no plans to tabulate or publish the information it collects.

**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.**

There are no USDA forms involved in this information collection.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in the “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act.”**

APHIS is able to certify compliance with all the provisions under the Act.

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

Statistical methods are not used in this information collection.