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Through: Charlene Parker *Charlene Parker 3/20/14*
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From: Rex A. Barnes
Associate Administrator *Rex A. Barnes* **MAR 18 2014**
Agricultural Marketing Service

Subject: Request for Emergency Review and Approval for a New Information Collection Request – National Organic Program (NOP) Organic Certification Cost-Share Programs

We are requesting emergency review and approval of a new information collection. This new information collection addresses reporting requirements for two organic certification cost-share programs: the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program (NOCCSP) and the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Organic Certification Cost-Share Program. The NOCCSP was authorized under the recently signed Agriculture Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill, Pub. L. 113-79). Effective February 7, 2014, this Act amends section 10606(d)(1) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 and makes funding available for the NOCCSP for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. The AMA is authorized under the Federal Crop Insurance Act (FCIA). Through participating state agencies, both programs provide cost-share assistance to producers and handlers for organic certification costs.

This information collection does not include any new forms. The following existing forms and reporting requirements are necessary for the NOP to effectively carry out the requirements of the program:

- (a) SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance," (approved under OMB collection number 4040-0004) is required to apply for federal assistance.
- (b) USDA/AMS-33 Face Page (Agreement Face Sheet). The Agreement Face Sheet sets forth the agreed upon responsibilities of AMS project work. It also indicates the agreed upon grant funding dollar amounts and the beginning date and ending date of the project

- work and the grant agreement. One copy of this Agreement Face Sheet is required to be returned to AMS with the date and grantee's signature(s).
- (c) SF-270, "Request for Advance or Reimbursement," (approved under OMB collection number 4040-0012) is required whenever the grantees request an advance or reimbursement of Federal grant funds.
 - (d) SF-425, "Federal Financial Report," (approved under OMB collection number 4040-0014) is required semi-annually to report grantee expenditures.
 - (e) Narrative Report is required annually and describes program activities undertaken by the state agency and/or any sub-recipients throughout the funding period.
 - (f) Spreadsheet of Operations Reimbursed is required semi-annually and lists the producers receiving cost-share payments within the reporting time period.
 - (g) Producer or handler application, proof of USDA organic certification, an itemized invoice showing expenses paid to a third-party certifying agent for certification services, and a W-9 tax form. Each producer or handler who chooses to participate in these organic certification cost-share programs must submit this information to a given state agency once per year.

AMS estimates that approximately 56 state agencies (50 State Departments of Agriculture, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. Territories) and 12,000 organic producers and handlers would fill out paperwork, with an estimated reporting burden of 1.09 hours per respondent for a total annual burden on respondents of 13,120 hours.

We are requesting emergency review and approval because NOP is unable to make an announcement of the availability of organic certification cost-share funds until the request for this new information collection has obtained OMB approval. The notice of availability of funds is typically published in September of the fiscal year, and the Agriculture Act of 2014 was not formalized until almost halfway through fiscal year 2014 (February 7, 2014). Consequently, AMS was unable to initiate the information collection process until February 2014. AMS is scheduled to publish a Federal Register notice of request for a new information collection on March 17, 2014. Once published, this notice will request comments for sixty days on the estimated burden. However, due to the need to consider comments received and then issue another notice in the Federal Register for an additional thirty days of comment, we will not be able to complete the information collection process before the fiscal year is more than three quarters complete. For this reason, and in compliance with OMB regulations (5 CFR part 1320), which implement the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13), we are requesting emergency approval for this information collection by May 15, 2014.

Attached is the Form OMB 83-I and the Supporting Statement and AMS-71 Spreadsheet.

Attachments