

**Request for Approval under the “DOI Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Agency Service Delivery”**  
**OMB Control Number: 1090-0011**

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**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:** Focus groups to evaluate landowner preferences for Farm Bill conservation program service delivery

**PURPOSE:**

The behaviors of individual landowners, many of whom actively farm their properties, have the potential to conserve water quality and conserve fisheries and wildlife habitat. In fact, the steering committee for the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie and Big Rivers LCC has identified a need to better understand the motivations of landowners for participating in programs that improve wildlife habitat and water quality in the region.

The purpose of these focus groups is to identify and evaluate the motivating reasons that producers in the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie enroll in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Bill conservation programs. We will collect information on perceived strengths and weaknesses of specific Farm Bill programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). A better understanding of individuals’ beliefs about these programs will offer practical insights into designing and developing programs, practices and messages that encourage broader participation in conservation and sustainable practices within the agricultural community.

A standard script will be followed in each focus group, and the focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. We will analyze the discussion using “key concepts” and “critical incidents” approaches to develop a framework concerning the important motivators and barriers to landowner/producer adoption of conservation programs (Krueger & Casey 2009).

**DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:**

Focus group participants will be landowners who own 40 acres or greater of agricultural property in the study area. The study area consists of Jasper County, IA, Richland County, ND, and Mower County, MN. We target completing a total of 6 focus groups in these locations, with 6-10 participants in each focus group. Our goal is to complete focus groups with landowners/producers who are either actively involved with Farm Bill conservation programs or have the potential to participate in the future but are not doing so currently.

**TYPE OF COLLECTION:** (Check one)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form          | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus Group                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                 |

## **CERTIFICATION:**

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

## **LITERATURE CITED**

Krueger, R.A. and M.A. Casey. 2009 Focus groups: a practical guide for applied research. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Name: David C. Fulton

To assist review, please provide answers to the following questions:

**Personally Identifiable Information:**

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected?  Yes  No
2. If Yes, is the information that will be collected included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974?  Yes  No
3. If Applicable, has a System or Records Notice been published?  Yes  No

**Gifts or Payments:**

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants?  Yes  No (If yes, please explain.)

Participants will receive a \$50 payment for their time and effort. Each individual will engage in one focus group for the duration of two hours. The reimbursement will help to account for time spent traveling to and from the focus group location and the time during which individuals engage in it. We will provide reimbursement in the form of a check upon an individual's arrival to the focus group location.

**BURDEN HOURS**

Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Focus groups	60	2 hours	120 hours
<b>Totals</b>			

The dollar equivalent of the 120 hour burden is \$3,717.60. This is estimated using a value of \$30.98 per hour for respondents' time. This value is based on the wages and salaries of \$22.13 multiplied by 1.4 to address benefits, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employer Costs for Employee Compensation – September 2012, USDL-14-2208.

**FEDERAL COST:** The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$3,717.60

**If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:**

**The selection of your targeted respondents**

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?  Yes  No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan). If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them.

We will randomly select focus group participants from a sampling frame of landowners who own 40 acres or greater of agricultural property in Mower County, MN; Richland County, ND; and Jasper County, IA. Selection will be based on participation in Farm Bill conservation programs.

**Administration of the Instrument**

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)

Web-based or other forms of Social Media

Telephone

In-person

Mail

Other, Explain

2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used?  Yes  No

**Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

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**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:** Provide the name of the collection that is the subject of the request. (e.g., Comment card for soliciting feedback on xxxx)

**PURPOSE:** Provide a brief description of the purpose of this collection and how it will be used. If this is part of a larger study or effort, please include this in your explanation.

**DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:** Provide a brief description of the targeted group or groups for this collection of information. These groups must have experience with the program.

**TYPE OF COLLECTION:** Check one box. If you are requesting approval of other instruments under the generic, you must complete a form for each instrument.

**CERTIFICATION:** Please read the certification carefully. If you incorrectly certify, the collection will be returned as improperly submitted or it will be disapproved.

**Personally Identifiable Information:** Provide answers to the questions.

**Gifts or Payments:** If you answer yes to the question, please describe the incentive and provide a justification for the amount.

### **BURDEN HOURS:**

**Category of Respondents:** Identify who you expect the respondents to be in terms of the following categories: (1) Individuals or Households; (2) Private Sector; (3) State, local, or tribal governments; or (4) Federal Government. Only one type of respondent can be selected.

**No. of Respondents:** Provide an estimate of the Number of respondents.

**Participation Time:** Provide an estimate of the amount of time required for a respondent to participate (e.g., fill out a survey or participate in a focus group)

**Burden:** Provide the Annual burden hours: Multiply the Number of responses and the participation time in minutes and divide by 60.

**FEDERAL COST:** Provide an estimate of the annual cost to the Federal government.

**If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:**

**The selection of your targeted respondents.** Please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them. If the answer is yes, to the first question, you may provide the sampling plan in an attachment.

**Administration of the Instrument:** Identify how the information will be collected. More than one box may be checked. Indicate whether there will be interviewers (e.g., for surveys) or facilitators (e.g., for focus groups) used.

**Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.**