OMB Information Collection Supporting Statement
ARS Animal Health National Program Assessment Survey Form
0518-0042

1. **Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collections. Attach a copy if the appropriate section of each status and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

   The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) research covers the span of nutrition, food safety and quality, animal and plant production and protection, and natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems and is organized into seventeen National Programs addressing specific areas of this research. Research in the Agency is conducted through coordinated National Programs on a five year cycle as described below. This cycle ensures that ARS research meets OMB's Research and Development Investment Criteria and other external requirements, including the Research Title of the Farm Bill, and the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). These National Programs serve to bring coordination, communication, and empowerment to approximately 750 research projects carried out by ARS and focus on the relevance, impact, and quality of ARS research. The requested voluntary electronic evaluation survey will give the beneficiaries of ARS research the opportunity to provide input on the impact of several ARS National Programs. For the purpose of this National Program Assessment, impact is defined as research that has influenced or will significantly influence the area covered by the National Program; has created or will create information, best practices, and/or economic opportunities for the National Program's customers, partners, and stakeholders; or has enabled or will enable action and regulatory agencies to formulate policies and regulations to support American agriculture. The report and evaluation form will be available online through a dedicated URL. The input provided through the completion of the evaluation form will be shared with customers, partners, and stakeholders as part of each National Program's assessment process.

   The ARS has 17 National Programs, each of which are assessed every five years on a rotating basis as part of ARS' National Program planning cycle to ensure the relevance, quality, and impact of ARS research. The assessment serves as both a retrospective evaluation and as the foundation for future priority setting for the Agency. Although the exact process for an assessment varies by the nature of the National Program, all include the following four stages:

   - Conducting an in-house program assessment and documenting research accomplishments and/or progress for presentation to external reviewers;
   - Conducting an external review of accomplishments and/or progress, based on the preceding documentation, focused on the research's relevance, quality, and impact;
   - Recording the results of the review; and
   - Informing ARS leadership of evaluation results.

All of the methodologies for an assessment include developing a written report of accomplishments from research conducted during the previous five years. One assessment method involves sending the accomplishment report to a broad group of informed stakeholders for their reference and asking them to respond by completing an online survey about the impact of the National Program. This survey information is then compiled into a report that can be shared with stakeholders and ARS Administrators. The survey information can also be used for the next step of the National Program Planning cycle, which is planning for the following five years.

This survey has previously been used by only one of ARS' National Programs but interest in its use has expanded. Three National Programs will be using this survey within the three year information collection period and possibly a fourth, which has been included in the burden hour estimate. Because ARS National Program planning cycle is 5 years in length and is staggered among National Programs, only one or two National Programs will be using the survey in any given year. The survey consists of a set of questions used in common by several or all of the National Programs and a few questions specific to a given National Program.

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.**

An electronic survey has been prepared by the ARS Office of National Programs to reach out to as many of the customers, partners, and stakeholders of its National Programs as possible. The purpose of the survey is to assess the impact of the research in the current National Program cycle and ensure relevance for the next cycle. This survey has been used several times by the Animal Health National Program, for which the information gathered was analyzed in assessing impact of the research done in the previous cycle and identifying changes needed for upcoming research.

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, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means to the collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

The questionnaire is an electronic survey that can only be completed on-line through a dedicated URL for each National Program. The software selected for this survey, Survey Tracker, will allow the efficient analysis of information provided by a diverse group of customers with varied needs representing various agricultural producers and businesses, scientists representing universities throughout the United States, the private sector, and action and regulatory agencies in Federal and State agencies that are the beneficiaries of the research conducted by the respective ARS National Program.

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

   ARS National Program Assessments are for research projects planned as part of a 5-year program cycle. There is no other known tracking system for our customers to assess the impact of our research.

5. **If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entitles (Item 5 of OMB Form 82-I), describe any methods to minimize the burden.**

   The information collected will have no economic impact on small businesses or small entities.

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.**

   Failure to collect input from our customers on the impact of our research program would significantly inhibit the relevance and credibility of the research conducted at ARS.

7. **Special Circumstances Relating to Guidelines 5 CFR 1320.5**

   There are no special circumstances for the collection of information requirements.

8. **Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside Agency.**

   A Federal Register notice was published on November 5, 2015, Volume 8, pages 68492-684931. No comments were received. Because of the need to retain the anonymity of those responding to the survey, ARS realized that it was not appropriate to broadly contact stakeholders to obtain their opinions about the survey. ARS did discuss the survey with Kathy Simmons of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and Michele Colby at the Department of Homeland Security. Both were very positive about the survey, they loved the transparency, and that they found it to be a very efficient way of informing the government on needs and priorities

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

   No payment of gift was or will be provided to respondents.

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

The confidentiality of information received by Office of National Programs is consistent with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

Questions of a sensitive nature are not applicable to this information collection. The questions in the electronic survey deal entirely with the performance and impact of the respective National Program.

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

The estimated annual burden is 131 hours

	No. Responses /Respondent	Total No. Respondents annually	Minutes per response	Total Hours
Respondents	500	500	15 minutes	125
Non-respondents	300	300	1 minute	6
Total	800	800		131

Recent experience has provide the data for calculating the number of surveys sent out per National Program and the response rate. The estimated hours are based on the length of the survey. It is expected that it will take 15 minutes to complete the survey/questionnaire. See Copy of spreadsheet.

An approximately equal number of university scientists and trade/science association representatives will be completing this survey. Based on median hourly wages from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for Animal Scientists ($29.39) and Public Relations and Fundraising Managers ($48.80), an average hourly rate of $39 was used. The total estimated cost to respondents is $5,109.

Activity	Total Hours	Cost per hour	Total Cost
Reporting	131	$39	$5,109

13. Estimate of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents or Record-Keepers

There are no capital and start-up, or operation, maintenance and purchase costs associated with this information collection.

14. Annualized Costs to the Federal Government.

The estimated annualized cost to the Federal Government is $155. The estimated time to extract the information from the software (Survey Tracker) is 5 hours using a GS-11 rate from OPM for the Baltimore/Washington Area.

15. **Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of OMB Form 83-I.**
The number of respondents and responses increased from 400 to 800 and the burden hours increased from 100 hours to 131 hours. The increase is due to number of people who are expected to complete the survey within the three year approval period.

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

Information will be reported based on queries via the ARS online database search page.

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.**

The Office of National Programs is not seeking approval to exempt display of the expiration date for OMB approval.

18. **Explain each exception to the certification statement identified Item 19 "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act."**

There are no exceptions to Item 19 of OMB Form 83-I.