

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 2010-0042)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Focus Group Studies of Stakeholder and Regulated Community Reactions to EPA Messages

PURPOSE:

EPA recently revised the regulation that protects agricultural workers from pesticide exposure. States and EPA are responsible for implementing and enforcing the regulations while the agriculture industry is required to comply. Given past experience in implementing worker protections in the agriculture industry, EPA’s Office of Pesticide Programs is developing plain language messaging to help explain the new revisions, the importance of compliance and increase general awareness of the revisions. OPP is looking to communicate with the agricultural industry via the media outlets they already use and in a way that is positive and action-oriented.

EPA would like to use targeted focus group testing to ask participants to review EPA’s messaging on agricultural worker protection and regulatory compliance and give their opinion on their preferred media consumption habits, how they find regulatory information, and how they perceive information from EPA. The information gleaned from focus group testing will be a critical component of getting the messaging into a format understood and accepted by our stakeholders and regulated community.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Participants will be adult owner and operators of agriculture businesses across the United States and will be recruited to meet the following criteria within each individual focus group session:

- Currently involved in fruit or vegetable growing within the US
- Mix of ages
- Mix of geographic locations across the US
- Interest in agricultural worker health and safety and a desire to obtain additional information

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form
 Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software)
 Focus Group

Customer Satisfaction Survey
 Small Discussion Group
 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 solicit opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

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

Personally Identifiable Information:

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

Gifts or Payments:

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? [X] Yes [] No

Participation will be voluntary. Participants will have to expend time and effort to participate in the focus groups. In order to accommodate participants’ schedules, the focus groups will be conducted online, in a format that has been used by the EPA in prior focus groups, mainly for the SmartWay Transit program. As EPA is looking for feedback from leaders in the field with limited time, the participants will be compensated approximately \$150 for their time. Due to the online nature of the focus groups, there is no need to provide other compensation such as refreshments or parking vouchers.

Providing such compensation is a best practice for qualitative research of this type. In the absence of such compensation, participation is likely to be limited to those with a highly active interest in the subject matter or who enjoy participation in research studies and have ample time to do so. It is likely that these individuals would not be representative of the target population for the research. The compensation of respondents is essential to ensuring participation from a representative sample of the target population.

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Total Individuals	12	75 minutes	15 hrs

FEDERAL COST: The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is approximately \$5,800 per focus group. EPA plans to conduct between 2 focus group studies this year (~6 participants per group). In order to solicit effective results, focus group studies require the expertise and management of experienced facilitators, and thus EPA will use a contractor to recruit participants and conduct the focus group sessions.

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?

Sampling Plan

Participants will be recruited through Penton Agriculture’s media platforms. Penton Agriculture has a number of media publications and online platforms that are tailored specifically to EPA’s target audience. Penton also specializes in focus group activities and maintains a database of potential research participants. All potential participants will be administered a screening questionnaire to assess demographic, geographic, behavioral and attitudinal characteristics that may qualify or disqualify them for participation.

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.

*See attached Moderator Guide with associated attachments.