

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO)  
OMB Number: 0508-0005  
Minority Farm Register

**Purpose:**

This request for OMB review is to obtain approval on the extension of the currently approved information collection request (ICR) on the Minority Farm Register (The Register). Authority for the collection is 7 U.S.C. 2279. The Register will be a client list for the Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO) and available through the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for outreach purposes. Participation in the Register will be voluntary. By joining the Register, an individual will authorize release of collected information to other government entities, approved community-based outreach organizations, State and local governments and educational institutions that conduct outreach services targeted to minority and ethnic constituencies.

**Background:**

Section 10707 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171) (7 U.S.C. 2279(a) (4) (b)) is provided for inter-agency funding. In addition, the Farm Service Agency (FSA), seeing the potential of the Register as a valued outreach tool and in continued cooperation with the OAO, it was originally agreed to create the Register as an FSA system of records.

The Register was historically maintained by the FSA but will now be managed and maintained solely by the OAO. Additionally, all release of client listings for USDA program outreach by non-USDA entities will be managed by the OAO.

The Register will promote program equity among minority farmers. Current records contain racial and ethnic data for some program participants, but the Privacy Act prohibits release of this information to entities such as universities and community-based organizations even if the information will be used for USDA outreach efforts. The Register will not be subject to that constraint because releases of information will be authorized by each participant.

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

**1. CIRCUMSTANCES MAKING COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY:**

Section 10707 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171) (2002 Farm Bill) (7 U.S.C. 2279) requires the Secretary to:

*“...carry out an outreach and technical assistance program to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers--  
(A) in owning and operating farms and ranches; and  
(B) in participating equitably in the full range of agricultural programs offered by the Department.”*

This information collection is necessary to maintain a client list for the OAO and USDA program outreach. The collected information is a tool to promote equal access to USDA's programs and services for minority farmers and ranchers with agricultural interests. These individuals may receive information or personal contact through USDA outreach efforts.

## 2. HOW, BY WHOM, AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE INFORMATION IS TO BE USED:

The Register will provide a name and address file of those interested in outreach efforts. Users will include the USDA's Office of Advocacy and Outreach, community-based organizations, 1890 Land Grant Colleges, other minority-serving educational institutions, USDA agencies, and other Federal agencies offering new farmer and other assistance programs.

Individuals provide name, address, phone number, farm location, race, ethnicity and gender on the Minority Farm Register permission form, AD-2035. Names and addresses are the only required information. An individual only needs to sign up for the Register once. Every three years, OAO updates the files and provide members an opportunity to change their information. Members may also change their information or remove their names from the Register at any time.

OAO manages the Register and releases names, addresses and phone numbers of individuals to approved outreach organizations requesting lists of individuals with particular racial and ethnic characteristics with their authorization.

Paper and electronic versions of The Register materials are available in both English and Spanish. Informational registration materials are distributed to local, State and Federal community-based organizations, educational institutions and other groups serving minority clientele. Respondents submit forms electronically and by mail, fax or delivery to OAO.

## 3. USE OF IMPROVED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

The Register sign-up form is available through the USDA e-Forms web site. Individuals with an electronic access code will be able to submit the form electronically. Those who do not have a code will be able obtain a copy of the form from a USDA office as well as on the internet. The on-line form can be filled out on-line and printed. These forms must be signed and submitted to any USDA Service Center or directly to OAO by mail or personal delivery.

#### 4. EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION:

There is some duplication of the information collected with information already on file. Since the purpose of the collection is to obtain individuals' permission under the Privacy Act to release personal information, the specific information must be positively identified, and it is not possible to avoid some duplication. However, there will be opportunities to avoid some duplication. USDA outreach coordinators, small farm coordinators, and other USDA agency officials can compare the list of registrants to their current customer contact lists to avoid duplicate efforts to reach producers. Additionally, the 3-year requirement to update the Register will be conducted.

#### 5. METHODS TO MINIMIZE BURDEN OF SMALL BUSINESSES OR ENTITIES:

The reporting requirements are identical for all respondents and offer no greater burden for small entities. And, the requirements are already as minimal as possible since the collection only asks for the information for which permission to release under the Privacy Act is being sought.

#### 6. CONSEQUENCE IF INFORMATION COLLECTION WERE LESS FREQUENT:

With the exception of updates to the information or requests to be removed from the Register, the information is only collected once. If this information was not collected, the Register would not exist as there would not be any registrant supplying their voluntary personal information.

#### 7. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

There are no special circumstances for this information collection.

#### 8. FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE AND CONSULTATION WITH PERSONS OUTSIDE THE AGENCY:

A Federal Register Notice requesting public comments on this information collection was published August 16, 2016 (81 FR 58468). The comment period ended October 17, 2016. No comments were received indicating no impact on the information collections.

The following individuals were asked to comment specifically on the adequacy of the actual brochure, which has not been officially revised since these individuals provided comments in 2013, to be used to explain the Register and that will contain the form. They were asked to comment on the time required to read the brochure and complete and submit the form, which was originally estimated at 5 minutes.

1. L. JoAnne Bevers, Florida, telephone: 407-766-4202
2. Vera Logan, North Carolina, Telephone: 828-254-3577
3. Willie Swian, Alabama, Telephone: 256-493-1883.

9. PAYMENTS OR GIFTS TO RESPONDENTS:

There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS:

Information collected is handled according to established USDA procedures implementing the Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act and OMB Circular A-130, "Responsibilities for Maintenance of Records About Individuals by Federal Agencies."

Individuals will be notified on the form itself and in all informational materials that their name and address information might be shared with groups conducting minority outreach efforts. The Privacy Act notice was published in the Federal Register specifically states the purposes for which the personal data will be released. A Privacy Act statement is included on the informational brochure.

11. QUESTIONS OF A SENSITIVE NATURE:

Individuals are asked to provide personal address, gender, racial and ethnic information.

12. ESTIMATES OF BURDEN:

See the attachment on the estimated burden hours in this information collection.

The average hourly rate for the respondents is \$25.71 (based on October 2016 DOL average hourly rate). The respondent's annual cost burden associated with this information collection is \$119,988 (4,667 x \$25.71).

13. TOTAL ANNUAL COST BURDEN TO RESPONDENTS:

There is no annual cost burden to respondents.

14. ANUALIZED COSTS TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

The total annual cost to the Federal Government for maintaining the Minority Farm Register is \$195,000. Explaining the Minority Farm Register program and customer service in USDA offices are performed by GS-5 through GS-9 level individuals and the program is expected to occupy one quarter of a staff year at the GS-15 level in the USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach each year.

Annual costs for each of the three years are estimated at \$58,000 for salaries and benefits, \$5,000 for printing and mailing, and \$2,000 miscellaneous.

15. REASONS FOR CHANGES IN BURDEN:

There is no change to the burden since the last OMB approval.

16. TABULATION, ANALYSIS, AND PUBLICATION PLANS:

Minority Farm Register information is protected under the Privacy Act. No summary data or individual records will be published to the general public. When USDA agencies, community-based organizations, Land Grant Colleges, and other minority-serving educational institutions request information on the register, the USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach will release a list of registrants and their contact information. The lists will generally include name, address, phone numbers, emails, farm location, race, gender, and ethnicity.

17. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF NON-DISPLAY OF EXPIRATION DATE:

There is no request for non-display of the expiration date.

18. EXCEPTIONS TO CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

19. HOW IS THIS INFORMATION COLLECTION RELATED TO THE CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER?

The form of AD-2035 is used to support the delivery of USDA programs, services and information by USDA service centers. The electronic AD-2035 is part of the customer's Internet, one-stop shopping experience. It is currently available on the Internet at:

[http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/ad2035\\_040729v01.pdf](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/ad2035_040729v01.pdf). After approval of this action, the form will be located at: <http://www.outreach.usda.gov/mfr.htm>