



United States Department of Agriculture

Rural Development

September 22, 2016

Rural Business  
Cooperative Service

1400 Independence Ave  
SW  
Washington, DC 20250  
Voice 202.720.4581  
Fax 202.720.2080

TO: Vlad Dorjets, OMB Desk Officer  
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs  
Office of Management and Budget

THROUGH: Charlene Parker, Department Clearance Officer  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Office of Chief Information Office

FROM: <sup>for</sup> Samuel Rikkers  
Administrator   
Rural Business Cooperative Service

SUBJECT: Justification for the addition of an electronic survey to OMB collection  
0570-0007

Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) is requesting a non-substantive change to the Cooperative Statistics survey collection (OMB Control No. 0570-0007). Due to technical advancements, RBS now has the ability to begin phasing out the current collection of paper based surveys used to produce this report. Currently, 60% or more of the total population of Agricultural Cooperatives (approximately 2,500 entities) respond annually to the RBS Cooperative Statistics survey through a mail based paper survey instrument. This imposes a high workload burden on both the respondent and the government.

RBS is seeking approval to produce an alternative survey instrument using the Survey Monkey platform that incorporates the same questions as the current paper collection but offers respondents a more convenient medium for survey submission and an overall reduction in question volume through electronic logic that eliminates irrelevant material. Specifically, the content of the various paper based surveys in this collection has been replicated in this digital instrument for electronic distribution by email. The purpose, frequency, content, and voluntary nature of the survey will remain unchanged. At present this is a request for the addition of this instrument to the current collection. However, the intent is to begin the process of acclimating respondents to this new tool as a replacement to the paper survey and ultimately phase out the rest of this collection.

Once OMB approves the changes, RBS intends to deploy this survey as the first option for response as an electronic alternative to the current survey and follow up a paper version for non-respondents.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Matt Fountain at [matt.fountain@osec.usda.gov](mailto:matt.fountain@osec.usda.gov) or (202) 280-9075.

Attachments