

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT B  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK GENERIC CLEARANCE**

**B. STATISTICAL METHODS**

Data collection methods and procedures will vary across collections. These collections are for internal management purposes. NIFA has no plans to publish or otherwise release this information.

**1. Universe and Respondent Selection**

The universe of participants includes administrators, faculty, and staff at Land-Grant Universities who receive grant awards from NIFA or assist in administering these funds; other State-level officials involved in food and agriculture research, education, or extension efforts; and, food and agriculture-related advisory boards, non-profit organizations, and trade associations.

The scope of data collection is limited to gaining stakeholder feedback on the relevance and adequacy of programmatic priorities and the efficiency and effectiveness of agency business processes. The activities under this clearance may involve samples of self-selected customers, convenience samples, and quota samples, with respondents selected either to cover a broad range of customers or to include specific characteristics related to certain programs or processes. Results will not be used to make statements representative of the universe of study, produce statistical descriptions (careful, repeatable measurements), or to generalize the data beyond the scope of the sample. The specific sample planned for each individual collection and the method for soliciting participation will be described fully in each collection request.

Qualitative surveys are tools used by program managers to change or improve programs, products, or services. The accuracy, reliability, and applicability of the results of these surveys are adequate for their purpose.

The samples associated with this collection are not subjected to the same scrutiny as scientifically drawn samples where estimates are published or otherwise released to the public.

**2. Procedures for Collecting Information**

For all categories of respondents, self-selection is an acceptable sample selection method for all modes of information collection. The information collections will use standard modes of administration. These include:

- Online data collections will be a principal method of data collection;
- In-person data collections will be implemented when the target groups are naturally congregated for grant-related meetings or trainings;
- Focus groups serve as a useful method when rich, in-depth information regarding attitudes and reactions to products is desired.

Stakeholders are typically pre-defined by relationship to a specific grant program, field of science or behavioral science, or business/oversight function. All surveys will be voluntary, non-scientific, and non-generalizable, reducing the need for estimation and sampling procedures.

The use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection to reduce burden is very likely given the longer duration of grants administered by the Agency and the pace at which scientific focus within a particular field shifts. Stakeholder feedback on business surveys, in particular information technology related surveys, may be annually until NIFA's business and information technology modernization efforts are completed.

### **3. Methods to Maximize Response**

Information collected under this generic clearance will not yield generalizable quantitative findings; it can provide useful customer input, but it does not yield data about customer opinions that can be generalized.

### **4. Testing of Procedures**

Pretesting may be done with internal staff, a limited number of external colleagues, and/or customers who are familiar with the programs and products. If the number of pretest respondents exceeds nine members of the public, the Agency will submit the pretest instruments for review under this generic clearance.