

OMB Information Collection Supporting Statement
Your Perspective on your grasslands in the Northern Great Plains - Survey for data collection
Collection Number: 0518-XXXX

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA), Agricultural Research Service's (ARS), will conduct a mail survey titled "Your Perspective on your grasslands in the Northern Great Plains" under authority of US Code 7, USC 2131 (Dept. of Agriculture) to conduct this study. This survey is a key component of a project that will provide needed insights into social aspects of northern Great Plains landowners' attitudes and behavioral intentions towards invasive species, with a specific focus on Kentucky bluegrass expansion and management on privately owned grasslands. This information will complement ongoing research on the ecological consequences of Kentucky bluegrass expansion and the efficacy of different management techniques, as well as broader research on invasive species management. We will address two primary research questions through the survey; 1) how landowners in North Dakota perceive and manage Kentucky bluegrass, and 2) how landowners in the northern Great Plains evaluate the acceptability of a new invasive grass species based on the ecosystem services/disservices provided by the species. The survey collects information from a randomly selected subset of landowners in 9 Counties in ND and includes 45 questions regarding the topics of: respondents farm/ranch characteristics, land management style, land use practices, opinions about new grass species, opinions about Kentucky bluegrass, Kentucky bluegrass management, and personal characteristics.

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.

How: This project uses an interdisciplinary research approach to bring together the diverse expertise needed to understand degree of degradation due to Kentucky bluegrass invasion and best management practices to control and/or manage bluegrass in northern Great Plains grasslands. Landowner responses will be used to assess whether invasion is seen as a problem, steps that are being taken to address the issue, and whether steps taken have proven effective.

By Whom: Scientists from Virginia Tech and scientists from the USDA-ARS Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory will collect and analyze the information from the survey using statistical analysis and modeling.

For what purpose: The information gathered from the survey will provide researchers with information regarding how salient the problem is to landowners, whether they are aware of a potential problem, and will help identify practices that are being used by producers to reduce and or manage Kentucky bluegrass. Results from the research associated with the survey will be published in peer-reviewed journals.

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.

Information will be collected through a mail survey to a random sample of landowners. This will be an effective way to reach the target audience which may contain a substantial fraction that have limited electronic media access. We will use telephone interviews to address nonresponse error by contacting a random sample of nonrespondents. The survey has been designed to minimize the time required to complete it.

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

A survey of this type has not been done by the Agricultural Research Service or anyone else to our knowledge before. No similar information exists.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods to minimize the burden.

There are no small business 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 know how farmers and ranchers perceive and manage ecosystem changes in relation to Kentucky bluegrass limits the scope and reduces innovation of current research efforts to inform sustainable land management practices in the northern Great Plains. Additionally, the information gathered from this survey will enable researchers to more effectively transfer information regarding Kentucky bluegrass management to landowners to increase the impact of this research on the agricultural community of the northern Great Plains.

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 August 24, 2018, Volume 83, Number 165, Page 42859. One comment from Jean Public was received: “THIS SURVEY IS COMPLETELY NOT NECESSARY. IT IS A WASTEFUL UNNECESARY FUNCTION OF THIS AGENCY WHICH DOESNT KNOW HOW TO OPERATE EFFICIENTLY OR EFFECTIELY AND JUST WASTES OUR TAX DOLLARS. I AM THOROUGHLY OPPOSED TO TAX DOLLARS BEING SPENT FOR HTIS USELESS SURVEY. IT IS JUST WASTING THEM. THIS COMMENT IS FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD.PLEASE RECEIPT.J EANPUBLIEE JEAN PUBILC1@YAHOO.COM”

The comment does not impact the collection.

Consultation on the information collection occurred with the following representatives prior to submission to OMB. The questions asked and the consultant’s responses are listed below their name.

Dr. Michael Sorice, 310A Cheatham Hall, 310 West Campus Dr. Blacksburg, VA 24061. Tel: 540-231-8303

1) Will the information gathered from this survey be useful?

Yes. The information will improve the delivery of services by the USDA to farmers and ranchers

2) Will this survey constitute a wasteful use of resources?

No. This project will create more benefits than it costs by helping the USDA track, understand, and intervene effectively to manage bluegrass.

Kiandra Rajala, 305 Cheatham Hall, 310 West Campus Dr. Blacksburg, VA 24061. Tel: 540-231-5483

1) Will the information gathered from this survey be useful?

Yes. The information gathered from this survey will inform the USDA of the concerns and needs of farmers and ranchers in regards to Kentucky bluegrass management.

2) Will this survey constitute a wasteful use of resources?

No. This survey will help the USDA understand landowner perspectives on Kentucky bluegrass and improve the efficacy of bluegrass management efforts.

Kelly Coburn, 307 Cheatham Hall, 310 West Campus Dr. Blacksburg, VA 24061. Tel: 540-231-0338.

1) Will the information gathered from this survey be useful?

Yes, the information collected will improve USDA's ability to deliver services in support of cattle operations on rangelands. This information is essential to ensuring that cattle operations remain productive and economically viable.

2) Will this survey constitute a wasteful use of resources?

It will not. The information collected is in response to costly environmental changes in the Northern Great Plains. This information has not been previously collected. By collecting this information, the USDA can identify how the USDA can better serve rangeland owners, generating economic benefits that support ranching and sustain rural livelihoods in the region.

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

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

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

In accordance with the Privacy Act, participant names and addresses will be replaced by codes. The file containing names, addresses and codes will be encrypted, password protected, and held in one computer in a locked location that can only be accessed by authorized personnel. The codes together with the information gathered by the survey will be put into a database that will be held in the password protected computers of three researchers who have signed confidentiality agreements. Once research is completed the file containing the names and addresses of the participants will be deleted in order to ensure future confidentiality. Reports and publications that use these data will be carefully reviewed before dissemination to prevent potential release of identifiable data.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

Questions of a sensitive nature are not applicable to this information collection.

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.

There is potential for 1278 respondents to complete the survey although expected response rate is 383 (see section B1 below). The time required to complete this information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time to check the boxes and the text fields. The burden to complete the survey is **95.75 hours** (See copy of spreadsheet. For the 895 (1278 potential respondents – 383 actual respondents) landowners who receive the questionnaire in the mail, look it over and decide not to participate we have allotted 2 minutes each or **29.83 hours**. Follow-up questionnaire to

10% of non-respondents ($895 \times 0.1 = 89.5$) is estimated to take 10 minutes per response (**14.92 hours**). Total hour burden for this collection is estimated at 140.5 hours.

The cost to our respondents is based on the mean hourly wage of \$24.34 According to Table 1 of *Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2017, All Occupations*. Cost of benefits and compensation guidance provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics set fringe benefits at 31% ($\$24.34 \times 1.31 = \31.89).

The total estimated cost to respondents is \$4,480.55 (31.89×140.5)

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 time for data entry, analysis and publication preparation is 170 hours. The information from the survey will be extracted and prepared for publication at a cost of \$35.87* per hour. *Based on civilian workers employer cost per hour worked (Table 2), in *Department of Labor Statistics, Employer costs for employee compensation – June 2018*.

36% fringe benefit for the government based on cost of benefits and compensation guidance provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics: $\$35.87 \times 1.36 = \48.78 .

The estimated annualized cost is \$8,292.6 of which \$8,292.6 will be paid by the Federal government through a Specific Cooperative Agreement with Virginia Tech who is contributing 20% of funds towards overall project goals.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of OMB Form 83-I.

This is a new collection resulting in a program change of 141 burden hours.

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

The data will be tabulated within 90 days of completion of the survey (after contacting non-respondents). Publication of the data will be made within 1 year to agricultural scientists, businesses professionals and Extension practitioners through professional conferences and journal publications for facilitating the technology transfer process to end-users.

There are two planned publications from this research. The first paper will focus on factors that influence landowners' acceptability of Kentucky bluegrass as a novel grassland ecosystem. This paper will examine the characteristics of grassland species that landowners prefer, landowners' beliefs about the ecosystem services/disservices of Kentucky bluegrass, and landowners' thresholds of acceptability for Kentucky bluegrass. The target journal for this paper is Ecology and Society. The second paper will focus on characterizing and understanding the drivers of land management practices for an (un)wanted invasive species (Kentucky bluegrass). This paper will characterize the land and landowner characteristics of producers within the sample and will examine social drivers of Kentucky bluegrass management practices. The target journal for this paper is Rangeland Ecology and Management.

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 USDA-ARS is not seeking approval to exempt display of the expiration date for OMB approval.

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

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

