

Supporting Statement B: Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

Collection #0518-0042

- 1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.**

This information collection does not employ sampling methods. This is a census survey of the customers, partners, and stakeholders that have participated in the ARS National Program Research Workshops or otherwise provided input to the program over the last 5 years. The population, maintained in a database at ARS, consists of some 300 customers, stakeholders, and partners of the ARS National Programs, including producers and producer representatives, consultants, industry representatives, and university researchers. The expected response rate is 63%, as the respondents have a high degree of familiarity and involvement with the program they are being asked to assess. This collection has been conducted previously.

- 2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:**

- **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,**

A statistical methodology for sample collection will not be used. A census approach will be employed. The population of customers, stakeholders, and partners who have participated in the previous National Program workshop and/or contributed in another way to the National Program over the last 5 years cannot be stratified any meaningful way.

- **Estimation procedure,**

An estimation procedure will not be used.

- **Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,**

We are interested in qualitative information about the program. We will not be running any advance statistical analyses. The analysis will involve frequencies and text analysis.

- **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and**

N/A.

- **Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

The burden will be minimal as this electronic survey will only be conducted once every 5-years.

- 3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.**

ARS has a strong stakeholder base that is highly involved with National Program planning. Every 5 years, ARS asks for input from customers, partners, and stakeholders via national workshops. In addition, National Program Leaders have had personal communication with stakeholders throughout the 5 year research program cycle. ARS stakeholders are interested in participating in the survey because they are the direct beneficiaries and/or partners in our research.

Throughout the execution of the survey, ARS will monitor the response. A series of emails will be sent to encourage participation. We will monitor the broad category of the respondents (producers/farmers, private sector, trade association, scientific association, consultants, universities) through Question 1 and encourage participation among subgroups if they do not appear to be represented adequately.

ARS has conducted stakeholder surveys for the last three National Program cycles (15 year span). We do not expect to have any non-response bias, but we will be monitoring the responses closely. If a particular sub-group of the population is under-represented, we will contact representatives of that group to compensate for the lack of input from that sub-group.

- 4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.**

Testing was performed internally. The survey respondents are very familiar with the questionnaire and are, in many cases, similar to our own personnel. There were no issues with the test. We are confident that the procedures and instrument we employ are trustworthy.

- 5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.**

The main statistical contact is Cyril Gay, ARS-ONP, 301-504-4786. The office responsible for the collection of the electronic survey is ARS-OCIO-CTSB.

OMB Research & Development Investment Criteria

ARS National Program Cycle

