

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
Environmental Monitoring Form
OMB No. 0579-0117

September 2020

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.

The mission of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is to provide leadership in ensuring the health and care of animals and plants, to improve agricultural productivity and competitiveness, and to contribute to the national economy and the public health.

APHIS is committed to accomplishing its mission in a manner that promotes and protects the integrity of the environment. This includes APHIS' compliance with all applicable environmental statutes.

Primary among these statutes is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality that implement the procedural aspects of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508). APHIS' regulations require APHIS to implement environmental monitoring for certain activities conducted for pests and disease control and eradication programs.

Activities for which APHIS conducts monitoring are those that have the greatest potential for harm to the human environment such as the use of pesticides, and for mitigations that have been developed to avoid that harm. APHIS conducts monitoring to ensure that the mitigations are enforced, and that mitigations are effective. In many cases, monitoring is required where pesticides are used close to habitats of endangered and threatened species. APHIS' monitoring is developed in compliance with the Endangered Species Act (50 CFR 17.11 and 17.12), and in coordination with the United States Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, and the United States Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service.

2. APHIS uses the following information activities to monitor activities that pose great harm to the human environment and for enforcement of mitigations. 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.

APHIS uses the following information collection activities to implement environmental monitoring for certain activities conducted for pests and disease control and eradication programs.

7 CFR 372.8(3) - APHIS Form 2060, Environmental Monitoring Form (State and Business)

APHIS field personnel, sometimes with the assistance of personnel from State Departments of Agriculture as well as private foundations, obtain information onsite at the time samples are collected. This information is recorded on APHIS Form 2060, and includes such items as the number of collected samples, description of the samples, and the environmental conditions at the collection site, including wind speed and direction, temperature, and topography. This form is used to collect information concerning the effects of pesticide use in sensitive habitats.

The information contained on the APHIS Form 2060 is vital for interpreting the laboratory tests APHIS conducts on its collected samples. If a sample was not accompanied by this form, APHIS would have no way of knowing from which site the sample was taken.

Using information on the form as well as the laboratory results from tests conducted on the samples. APHIS can assess the effects of pesticide use at a site and determine what, and if any, corrective action should be taken to mitigate the effects of the pesticide.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The information collected on the form needs to go to multiple recipients for different purposes who do not have the same software for receiving electronic data; therefore it is not practical at this time for an electronic version. Additionally, one of the most important fields on the form is the 'Remarks' section, where staff is able to draw maps or other pictographic information that is not easily collected in an electronic format.

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

The information that APHIS collects is exclusive to its mission of monitoring the effects of pesticide use in sensitive habitats. It is narrowly defined for APHIS' purpose. It describes environmental conditions in the immediate vicinity and is very time specific to each particular sample. The information recorded on APHIS Form 2060 describes the environmental context for the unique sample taken at a specific site and does not overlap with other State or Federal data gathering efforts.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

APHIS has endeavored to reduce the burden on all entities, including small businesses and other small entities. APHIS has determined 50 percent of the respondents are small entities.

The information APHIS collects is the minimum needed to monitor the well-being of sensitive habitats and the threatened or endangered species that may dwell within them. The destruction of these habitats could have serious, long-term consequences for American agriculture.

6. Describe the consequences 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.

Failing to collect this information would prevent APHIS from actively monitoring the effects of pesticides in areas where the inappropriate use of these chemicals could eventually produce disastrous results for vulnerable habitats and species.

If information is not collected frequently enough, APHIS' ability to effectively monitor chemical residues in the environment is compromised. A compromised monitoring program could hamper APHIS' ability to initiate corrective action, should it be needed. In addition, a compromised monitoring program would result in APHIS failing to comply with the National Endangered Species Act and Environmental Science Associates regulations, as well as APHIS Directives.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information collection guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

- **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**

Documentation of environmental samples is reported on APHIS Form 2060 on an as-needed basis, usually within a few days of collection of the samples. Samples must be promptly prepared and shipped to the analytical chemistry lab so that the samples do not degrade over time, and a copy of APHIS Form 2060 is shipped along with the sample. The sample collection schedule, therefore, dictates the schedule on which the information is reported to APHIS.

- **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**

The APHIS Form 2060 is prepared at the same time as the collection of the sample, as it is the documentation of the sample and surrounding information. This form is sent with sample; therefore, it is prepared usually within a few days of collection of the samples.

- **requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**

APHIS Form 2060 is a carbonless quadruplicate form. Three copies are automatically made as the original is completed. The original is submitted to APHIS, two copies are submitted with the samples to the analytical laboratory, and the third copy is retained by the creator of the document.

- **requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- **requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

No other special circumstances exist that would require this collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information collection guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

8. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the Agency to obtain their views on the availability of, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting from, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB.

APHIS held productive consultations with the following individuals concerning information collection activities associated with the use of APHIS Form 2060. The respondents were generally ambivalent regarding the paperwork requirements and didn't feel they were asking for too much information. The respondents are familiar with completing documentation.

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On Friday, May 22, 2020, pages 31135-31136, Vol. 85, No. 100, APHIS published in the Federal Register, a 60-day notice seeking public comments on its plans to request a 3-year renewal of this collection of information. There was one public comment received from a concerned citizen about her perception of the general disregard of the environment by USDA. It had no relevance to the purpose of the collection.

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

This information collection activity involves no payments or gifts to respondents.

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

No additional assurance of confidentiality is provided with this information collection. Any and all information obtained in this collection shall not be disclosed except in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and others that are considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary.

This information collection activity asks no questions of a personal or sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burden in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-1.**

- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burden hours for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.**

APHIS estimates the total annual cost to these respondents to be \$57,426.93. APHIS arrived at this figure by multiplying the hours of estimated response time (1100 hours) by the estimated average hourly wage of the above respondents (\$35.50) and then multiplying the result (\$39,050) by 1.4706 to capture benefit costs.

The estimated hourly rate of \$35.50 was derived from the most current U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Report – Occupational Employment and Wages in the United States at <http://www.bls.gov/news/release/pdf/ocwage/.pdf>.

13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimated should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.

There are no additional costs to the respondents.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The estimated cost for the Federal Government is \$34,950.00 (See APHIS Form 79.)

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 of 14 of the OMB Form 83-1.

There are no changes in this information collection.

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

APHIS has no plans to tabulate or publish the information APHIS collects.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date of OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

APHIS has no plans to seek approval for not displaying the OMB expiration date on the APHIS Form 2060.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in the “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act.”

APHIS certifies compliance with all provisions of the Act.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods.

Statistical methods are not used in this information collection.