

AMS RESEARCH COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT SURVEYS GENERIC CLEARANCE

From the

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE (AMS)

OMB No. XXXX-NEW

A. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

- 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**

Information collected in this generic request will vary according to the research project and the method of collection and sample will be tailored to the specific needs of the individual project. The respondent universe will consist of small to mid-size farm operations engaging in direct-marketing channels and other local and regional food systems stakeholders such as research institutions, agriculture producers, etc. Depending on the research project, some 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. However, the specific sample planned for each individual collection and the method for soliciting participation will be described fully in each collection request.

- 2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:**
 - Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,**
 - Estimation procedure,**
 - Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,**
 - Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and**
 - Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

Data collection methods and procedures will vary and the specifics of these will be provided with each collection request. AMS expects to use a variety of methodologies for these collections. For example, the AMS or its contractors may

use commercial survey-specific software to automate its collection and analysis of feedback. Information collection instruments may be electronically and/or physically disseminated. AMS will work with cooperators to efficiently disseminate surveys/other instruments and/or posted on target pages of the AMS web site.

- 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.**

AMS will make every effort to contact the universe of respondent described above. AMS will work closely with cooperators and stakeholders to develop a promotion plan to maximize response. For example, if the data collection is conducted through online surveys, AMS will follow up through other means of communications (e-mails, phone calls, etc.).

- 4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken.**

Surveys and other information collection instruments are often developed through cooperative agreements where stakeholders representing the population surveyed will conduct testing accordingly to ensure it appropriately represents the interest of stakeholders. For all other cases, AMS will contact stakeholder directly to test the specific information collection instrument.

- 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.**

AMS will obtain information from statisticians in the development, design, conduct, and analysis of surveys and other information collection instrument, when appropriate. This statistical expertise will be available from agency statisticians or from cooperators and the Agency will include the names and contact information of persons consulted in the specific information collection requests submitted under this generic clearance.