

**Farm Service Agency**  
**OMB control number: 0560-0253**  
**Transfer of Farm Records Between Counties (form FSA-179)**

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is requesting OMB approval on an extension with a revision of a currently approved information collection.

**Background:**

FSA programs are administered on the basis of “farm”. For program purposes, a farm is a collection of tracts of land that have the same owner and the same operator. Land with different owners may be considered to be a farm if all the land is operated by one person and additional criteria are met. A farm is typically administered in the FSA county office where the farm is physically located. A farm can be transferred from the physical location county office if the principle dwelling of the farm operator has changed, a change has occurred in the operation of the land, or there has been a change that would cause the receiving administrative county office to be more accessible. Without obtaining the information from producers for the FSA-179, the FSA county office will not be aware of an owner or operator’s desire to transfer a farm.

**Justification:**

**1. Circumstances making collection of information necessary.**

Form FSA-179, Transfer of Farm Records between Counties, is used as the request for a farm transfer from one county to another initiated by the producer. A farm transfer is a change in the administrative location of a farm.

A farm transfer can be initiated if the farm is being transferred back to the county where the farm is physically located, the principle dwelling of the farm operator has changed, a change has occurred in the operation of the land, or there has been a change that would cause the receiving administrative county office to be more accessible.

Owners and/or farm operators requesting a farm transfer for one of the reasons described above are responsible for notifying the County FSA Office of the desire to transfer the farm records. The request is documented on FSA-179 which is completed, signed by the owner or operator, and filed with the County FSA Office. The County FSA Committee must act on all farm transfer requests and issue their approval or disapproval on the form FSA-179. It is necessary to collect the information recorded on the form FSA-179 in order to determine the farm that is being transferred and to ensure that all owners and the operator of the farm agree to the transfer.

**2. How, by whom, and for what purpose is information used.**

Producers (owners and/or operators) initiate the form FSA-179 with their local FSA office. Producers are to inform their local Office any time a change is made to their farming operation. Working together, the producer and the FSA employee determine whether a transfer of farm records is appropriate. The producer may request that the land being transferred be combined with land already administered by the receiving county office. Some of the information requested on FSA-179 is available in the records maintained at the FSA office and can be obtained from the office. This information includes current data such as name and address of operator and owner, name of transferring county, farm number, and location of farm.

The information collected on the form FSA-179 is collected only if a farm transfer is being requested and is collected in a face-to-face setting with county office personnel. If a farm transfer request is not being initiated, this information is not collected.

The information is used by county office employees to document which farm is being transferred, what county it is being transferred to, and why it is being transferred.

The form FSA-179 assists county committees in determining why the farm transfers are being requested and not being requested for the purpose of increased program benefits, avoiding payment reductions, establishing eligibility to transfer base acres, or for circumventing any other program provision. Whether or not the review of the form FSA-179 revealed any scheme or device for circumventing program requirements, the collection of information is necessary to establish new farm records based on the transfer request.

### **3. Use of information technology.**

The form FSA-179 is available to producers in an electronic format only at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eForms/welcomeAction.do?Home>. The transferring FSA County Office is required to submit all current year records with the completed form FSA-179 to the receiving office. All owners and the operator of the farm being transferred are required to sign the form FSA-179.

### **4. Efforts to identify duplication.**

Forms are continually analyzed to determine whether information is duplicated on another form. The following information is not available from another source: (a) name of receiving county, (b) reason for transfer, (c) signature of owner(s), and (d) signature of operator.

The farm transfer process uses available information from farm and producer records, however, the receiving county and the farm involved is the choice of the producer.

**5. Methods to minimize burden on small business or other small entities.**

This collection of information does not place an additional burden on small businesses or other small entities. There are no small businesses associated with this package.

**6. Consequence if information collection were less frequent.**

The information is collected only when a producer requests a farm transfer, or the county committee determines that a farm transfer is required. If FSA-179 is not filed, county offices will not be able to determine whether the producer desires to transfer a farm.

**7. Special circumstances.**

There are no special circumstances that require the information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with general information collection guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

**8. Federal Register notice, summarization of comments and consultation with persons outside the agency.**

A Federal Register notice requesting comments on this information collection was published on August 31, 2023 (84 FR 60168). No public comments were received.

The consultations were performed with Luke Clark, Mason County, IL; Alan Newcomb, Jefferson County, IL; and Deb Kirkland, Macoupin County, IL. There were no comments for the purpose of this review.

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents.**

Payments and gifts are not provided to respondent.

**10. Confidentiality provided to respondents.**

Data collected is handled according to established FSA procedures implementing the Privacy Act and the Freedom of Information Act. Collection of this information also complies with the Privacy Act of 1974 and OMB Circular A-130, "Responsibilities for the Maintenance of Records About Individuals by Federal Agencies."

**11. Questions of a sensitive nature.**

Data collected is not considered sensitive in nature.

**12. Estimates of Burden.**

Nationwide, the total estimated annual burden in this request is 1,256 hours for completing the form. The number of respondents is 7,539 respondents, and it would take about 10 minutes for the producer to complete the form FSA-179.

Respondent cost per hour was derived by using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2022. Table 11-9013-Farmers and Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers. The U.S. mean hourly wage for this group is \$38.63, and the fringe benefits for all workers are averaged \$11.47 per hour worked as specified in the employee compensation, June 2022. The total of the respondent cost is \$50.10.

The estimate of annualized cost to respondents is estimated to be \$62,948.

There are no record keeping requirements for farm transfers for the producer.

**13. Total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers.**

No special equipment or services must be purchased by the respondent to collect the information. Therefore, there are no capital/startup costs.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government.**

The form is computer generated and available in the USDA e-Forms website.

The estimated cost to the Federal Government is \$427,512.

Program administration at the County Office is estimated at \$323,800. The average FSA employee wage is \$29.69, and the fringe benefit is \$13.29, that resulted in a total of \$42.95 per hour.

Program administration at the State Office is estimated at \$22,597. This estimate used a reduced response rate of 5 percent of the total responses of 377 responses. The average FSA State employee wage plus fringe benefit is \$59.94 (\$46.65 estimated employee average hourly wage based 2023 General Schedule, Grade 12, Step1, and the fringe benefit is \$13.29).

At the National Level, one program specialist is assigned responsibility of managing the farm records program. This specialist spends 15% of their time on program administration for farm transfers totaling \$81,115 annually (1,131 x \$71.72). The average FSA employee wage is \$58.43, and the fringe benefit is \$13.29 that resulted in a total of \$71.72.

No cost data is being provided for appeal cases.

**15. Reasons for changes in burden.**

The number of respondents and responses decreased by 13,701 while the burden hours decreased by 2,284 hours. The number of requests has decreased, likely in part due to the advancement of nationwide customer service and alignment of many farm programs to be based on physical location rather than administrative county.

**16. Tabulation, analysis, and publication plans.**

This collection is not intended to use statistical purposes.

**17. Reasons display of expiration date of OMB approval is inappropriate.**

FSA is displaying the OMB expiration date.

**18. Exceptions to the certification statement.**

The agency is able to certify compliance with all provisions.