

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT - PART A for**

**OMB Control Number 0518-0032:**

**Web Forms for Research Data, Models, Materials, & Publications as well as Study and  
Event Registration**

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## **A1. Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.**

**Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

This is a revision of a currently approved information collection request.

OMB Circular 130, Management of Federal Information Resources, establishes that “agencies will use electronic media and formats ... in order to make government information more easily accessible and useful to the public”. The Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA), 44 USC 3504, Title XVII, require agencies, by October 21, 2003, to provide the option of electronic submission of information by the public. USDA Department Regulation 1400-001, Information Policies, at § 8, authorizes agency field officers, subject to regulation, to issue information about the programs and services for which they are responsible.

In order to provide information and services related to its program responsibilities defined at 7 CFR § 2.65, the Agricultural Research Service needs to obtain certain basic information from the public. To advance GPEA goals, online forms are needed to allow the public to request from the Agricultural Research Service research data, models, materials, and publications as well as registration for scientific studies and events.

Authorities cited are included in package.

## **A2. Purpose and Use of the Information.**

**Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate how the agency has actually used the information received from the current collection.**

Information will be collected via web forms.

For research data, models, materials, or publications, the respondents will be agricultural researchers, students and teachers, businesspeople, and the public. For scientific studies or

events, the respondents will be members of the public interested in events or registering for studies.

For research data, models, materials, or publications the information collected will be used to provide the item requested. For scientific studies or events, the information collected will be used to register a person for an event or study.

The OMB 0518-0032 information collection enabled the agency to provide timely and efficient responses to requests for specific services.

### **A3. Use of information technology and burden reduction.**

**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 of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

Web forms are submitted electronically. The basis for the decision to make the collection electronic is:

1. To advance compliance with GPEA by providing for the option of electronic submission of information by the public.
2. To decrease the burden on the public by providing itemized forms that guide customers to provide complete information on the first submission.
3. To decrease the burden on the agency by obtaining on the first submission all information needed to fulfill the request.
4. To decrease the burden on the agency by providing an automated method for counting and reporting customer contacts under GPEA.

Forms are self-explanatory; where instructions are needed, they will be integrated within the form.

**A4. Efforts to identify duplication.**

**Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Question 2.**

OMB 0518-0032 is set to expire, and this information collection is the revision and extension. Collection efforts covered here relate to specific events, studies, or data and are completely unrelated to each other. A search of the ARS web site confirms this.

**A5. Impacts on small businesses or other small entities.**

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

There are no small business entities.

**A6. Consequences of collecting the information less frequently.**

**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.**

If this information collection is not conducted, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) will be hindered from advancing its own compliance with GPEA and will be unduly burdened in its ability to perform its research mission. ARS will be hindered from reducing the burden on its customers by providing them the most timely and efficient way to request services. The agency's own burden of customer contacts, and of count and reporting them, will not be reduced.

**A7. Special circumstances relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5.**

**Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:**

- **Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- **Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any 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.**

There are no special circumstances. The collection of information is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

**A8. Comments to the Federal Register Notice and efforts for consultation.**

**If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

On August 14, 2024, Vol. 89, No. 157, page 66030, the agency published the notice of information collection and request for comments in the Federal Register. The comment period was open until October 15, 2024. One comment was received.

**Comment 1:**

the us public should not need forms to request information. they should be able to write an email and request documents. this agency is supposed to be open and transparent, not sneaky and deceptive. i question the alleged "science" to be honest after reading the expose in the new york times of farm animals being experimented on by ars in nebraska and other sites. disgusting what you do to farm animals. its sickening. foreign cows to have 2 calves, lambs being forced to have births in december cold weather, etc. disgusting. i favor cutting all experimentation to zero at the ars. cut all funding. shut it down. its unethical immoral, depraved. jean publicee

[jeanpublic1@yahoo.com](mailto:jeanpublic1@yahoo.com)

**Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

**Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior years. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.**

Listed below are the consultants and their comments:

**Consultant 1:**

Andy Thigpen, Web Communications Manager, NIFA

[Philip.Thigpen@usda.gov](mailto:Philip.Thigpen@usda.gov)

Is the estimate of 1-5 minutes to complete the form a reasonable estimate of the time burden? *Yes*

Is the estimate of 1 form response per individual per year a reasonable estimate of the frequency of collection? *Yes, unless the files behind the form are updated more regularly*

Are the form instructions clear? *Yes, but I found "Affiliation" to be unclear. Maybe some prompt/help text in the field to provide an example of what you're looking for.*

Are the form disclosures understandable? *Yes*

Do the forms display the OMB number at the top and OMB verbiage at the bottom? *Yes*

Do the forms make appropriate use of information technology? *Yes*

**Consultant 2:**

Christine Stevenson, Web Managing Editor, ERS

[Christine.Stevenson@usda.gov](mailto:Christine.Stevenson@usda.gov)

Is the estimate of 1-5 minutes to complete the form a reasonable estimate of the time burden? *Yes*

Is the estimate of 1 form response per individual per year a reasonable estimate of the frequency of collection? *Yes*

Are the form instructions clear? *Yes*

Are the form disclosures understandable? *Yes*

Do the forms display the OMB number at the top and OMB verbiage at the bottom? *Yes*

Do the forms make appropriate use of information technology? *Yes, but I did not review for Section 508 compliance.*

*Overall, the forms were easy to understand and complete. I am curious as to why there is a field for middle name since these forms are tracking the use of the service, as opposed to a form that is collecting information about an individual to provide benefits and needs the person's full name (e.g., passport, Global Entry application, tax return, etc.). I'm also unsure what the difference is between "Affiliation" and "Reference" on the forms. Perhaps providing additional descriptions/context would be helpful.*

**Consultant 3:**

Vincent Calabresa, IT Program Manager, REE

[Vincent.Calabresa@usda.gov](mailto:Vincent.Calabresa@usda.gov)

Is the estimate of 1-5 minutes to complete the form a reasonable estimate of the time burden?

*Yes, was very easy and quick. Only took 2 minutes.*

Is the estimate of 1 form response per individual per year a reasonable estimate of the frequency of collection? *I'm unsure.*

Are the form instructions clear? *Yes, however I'm not sure what "Affiliation" means. There wasn't a drop down and no "Question mark" to click for an explanation.*

Are the form disclosures understandable? *Yes*

Do the forms display the OMB number at the top and OMB verbiage at the bottom? *Yes*

Do the forms make appropriate use of information technology? *Yes. I would add the ability to hover over "affiliate" to see what an example may be or a definition.*

**A9. Explain any decisions to provide any payment or gift to respondents.**

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

No payment or gift is provided to respondents.

**A10. Assurances of confidentiality provided to respondents.**

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

This information collection is subject to the Privacy Act. A Privacy Act notice will be included on the information collection forms.

**A11. Justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.**

**Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.**

This information does not include any questions of a sensitive nature.

**A12. Estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.**

**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.**

**A. 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 burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.**

14,400 people will complete the forms annually. The time required to complete the forms is 3

minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The burden for this collection is 720 hours. See copy of spreadsheet.

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

The cost to the respondents is based “All Occupations” with the annual mean wage of \$65,470 and a mean hourly wage of \$31.48 per hour. (From May 2023 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates U.S.: [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_nat.htm#00-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#00-0000))

The fringe benefits are calculated from <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecec.pdf>

(accessed November 2024) For civilians, wages and salaries cost employers

\$31.80 while benefit costs were \$14.41 (Total \$46.21). This is a 31.18% fringe benefit for the public:  $\$31.48 \times 1.3118 = \$41.30$ .

**A13. Estimates of other total annual cost burden.**

**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 questions 12 and 14). The cost estimates 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 capital and start-up, or operation, maintenance and purchase costs associated with this information collection.

**A14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.**

**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.**

Start-up cost (coding of forms and programming web interface): \$497.36  
(Based on approximately 6 hours for form maintenance/edits per year by existing staff (GS 13-5 hourly salary of \$67.17 at [https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2024/DCB\\_h.pdf](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2024/DCB_h.pdf))

**A15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments.**

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

The number of respondents and responses increased from 11,600 to 14,400. The burden hours have increased from 580 to 720. This increase is due to an annual increase in actual respondents since the 2021 estimate, as well as 9 more software models available for download. As of July 2024, 166 software models were available for download through the ARS website.

**A16. Plans for tabulation, and publication and project time schedule.**

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

This collection will not be published.

**A17. Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date.**

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

Expiration date will be shown.

**A18. Exceptions to the certification statement identified in Item 19.**

**Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 of the OMB 83-I" Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act."**

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