

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

September 18, 2012.

The Department of Agriculture has submitted the following information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Comments regarding (a) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology should be addressed to: Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), OIRA_Submission@OMB.EOP.GOV or fax (202) 395-5806 and to Departmental Clearance Office, USDA, OCIO, Mail Stop 7602, Washington, DC 20250-7602. Comments regarding these information collections are best assured of having their full effect if received within 30 days of this notification. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling (202) 720-8958.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number and the agency informs potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information that such persons are not required to respond to

the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Agricultural Research Service

Title: Web Forms for Research Data, Models, Materials, and Publications as well as Study and Event Registration.

OMB Control Number: 0518-0032.

Summary of Collection: 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". In order to provide information and services related to its program responsibilities defined at 7 CFR 2.65, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) needs to obtain certain basic information from the public. Online forms allow the public to request from ARS research data, models, materials, and publications as well as registration for scientific studies and events.

Need and Use of the Information: ARS will use the information to respond to requests for specific services. The information will be collected electronically. If this collection is not conducted, ARS will be hindered from reducing the burden on its customers by providing them the most timely and efficient way to request services.

Description of Respondents: Individuals or households.

Number of Respondents: 15,000.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion.

Total Burden Hours: 750.

Ruth Brown,

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 2012-23416 Filed 9-21-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-03-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Research Service

Notice of Intent To Seek OMB Approval To Collect Information: Forms Pertaining to the Peer Review of ARS Research Projects

AGENCY: Agricultural Research Service (ARS), USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The proposed information collection requirement described below will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and OMB implementing regulations. The Department is soliciting public comments on the subject proposal.

DATES: Written comments on this notice must be received by November 23, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments concerning this notice to: Michael S. Strauss, Peer Review Program Coordinator, Office of Scientific Quality Review; Agricultural Research Agency, USDA; 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Beltsville, Maryland 20705; Phone: 301-504-3283; Fax: 301-504-1251.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael S. Strauss, 301-504-3283.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Scientific Quality Review will seek approval from OMB to update six existing forms that will allow the ARS to efficiently manage data associated with the peer review of agricultural research. All forms are transferred and received in an electronic storage format that does not include on-line access.

Abstract: The Office of Scientific Quality Review was established in September of 1999 as a result of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act 1998 ("The Act") (Pub. L. 105-185). The Act included mandates to perform scientific peer reviews of all research activities conducted by the USDA. The Office manages the ARS peer review system by centrally planning peer panel reviews for ARS research projects on a five-year cycle.

Each set of reviews is assigned a chairperson to govern the review process. Peer reviewers are non-ARS scientists. Peer review panels are convened to provide in-depth discussion and review of the research project plans. Each panel reviewer receives information on between 1 and 20 ARS research projects.

On average, 220 research projects are reviewed annually by an estimated 200 reviewers; whereby approximately 200 are reviewed by panel and approximately 20 are reviewed through an ad hoc (written review) process. The organization and management of this peer review system, particularly panel reviews, is highly dependent on the use of forms.

The Office of Scientific Quality Review will seek OMB approval of the following forms:

1. **Confidentiality Agreement Form**—USDA uses this form to document that a selected reviewer is responsible for keeping confidential any information learned during the subject peer review process. The Confidentiality Agreement is signed prior to the reviewer's involvement in the peer review process. This form requires an original signature. Electronically transmitted scans of signed forms are also accepted.

2. **Panelist Information Form**—USDA uses this form to gather up-to-date background information about the reviewer as well as information relevant to the paying of an honorarium and for travel, where appropriate. Reviewers often include sensitive information on this form and, thus it is not retained or recorded in electronic form by the OSQR.

3. **Peer Review of an ARS Research Project Form (Peer Review Form)**—USDA uses this form to guide the reviewer's comments on the subject project. The form contains the reviewing criteria and space for the reviewer's narrative comments and evaluation.

4. **Ad Hoc Review Form**—USDA uses this in select cases (for Ad Hoc Reviewers who are not members of a review panel), a check-off listing of action classes at the end of the form allows them to provide an overall rating of the plan.

5. **Recommendations for ARS Research Project Form**—(Recommendations Form)—USDA uses this form to guide the panel's evaluation and critique of the review process. The form contains the recommendations of the panel for the subject research project.

6. **Panel Expense Report Form (Expense Report)**—USDA uses this form to document a panel reviewer's expense incurred traveling to and attending a peer review meeting. The Expense Report includes lodging, meals, and transportation expenses. When completed, the form contains sensitive information.

7. **Panel Invoice Form (Honorarium Form)**—USDA uses this form to document the transfer of an honorarium to a peer reviewer. Reviewers receive honoraria as compensation for serving as peer review panelists. This form requires an original signature. It is used only in special circumstances where reviewers cannot accept a direct bank

transfer of the honorarium. In such cases this is used in lieu of the SF-1034 to provide OSQR a written record of the honorarium payment.

(1) USDA's collection of information on the Confidentiality Agreement Form is needed to document that a selected reviewer is responsible for keeping confidential any information learned during the subject peer review process. The Confidentiality Agreement would be signed prior to the reviewer's involvement in the peer review process.

(2) USDA's collection of information on the Panelist Information Form is needed to gather up-to-date background information about the reviewer. It contains sensitive information.

(3) USDA's collection of information on the Peer Review Form is needed to guide the reviewer's comments on the subject project. It contains the reviewing criteria and space to insert comments.

(4) USDA's collection of information on the Ad Hoc Review Form is needed to guide reviewer comments of those not participating in a chaired panel and affords a place to select an overall Action Class rating for the plan.

(5) USDA's collection of information on the Recommendations Form is needed to guide the panel's critique of the review process. It contains the recommendations of the panel for the subject research project.

(6) USDA's collection of information on the Expense Report Form is needed to document a panel reviewer's expenses incurred by attending a peer review meeting. The Expense Report includes lodging, meals, and transportation expenses. It includes sensitive information.

(7) USDA's collection of information on the Honorarium Form is needed to document the transfer of an honorarium to the peer reviewer in those rare cases where an SF-1034 is not completed. The honorarium is given to reviewers as appreciation for their time spent on the panel review process.

Estimate of Burden: The burden associated with this approval process is the minimum required to achieve program objectives. The information collection frequency is the minimum consistent with program objectives. The following estimates of time required to complete the forms are based on OSQR's experience in working with reviewers and accepting their input into our procedures.

1. **Confidentiality Agreement Form:** This form takes up to 10 minutes to

complete. It only requires a signature and date, but the reviewer must read and consider the terms of the agreement.

2. **Panelist Information Form:** This form takes about 30 minutes to complete. It resembles a typical request for personal information; many reviewers provide the same data as grant reviewers in other peer review programs.

3. **Peer Review of an ARS Research Project Form (Peer Review Form)** This form takes 5–7 hours to complete. Because this is a review, the page length varies. Reviewers are free to write as much as they wish, but to complete the form they must thoroughly read and evaluate a research project plan that may exceed 60–70 pages in length.

4. **Recommendations for ARS Research Project Form (Recommendations Form)** This form takes 1–2 hours to complete. Because this is a review, the page length significantly varies. Reviewers are free to write as much as they wish. The form is prepared by one reviewer combining comments from two of the reviewers as found on the Peer Review Form as well as adding further analyses derived from discussion with other reviewers.

5. **Panel Expense Report Form (Expense Report)** This form takes 30 minutes to complete.

6. **Panel Invoice Form (Honorarium Form):** This form takes 3 minutes to complete. This form has the reviewer's personal information pre-filled and the reviewer only verifies its accuracy and signs.

Respondents and Estimated Number of Respondents: Scientific experts, currently working in the same discipline as the research projects under review, are selected to review research projects. These experts are notable peers within and external to the ARS. Annually, about 150 peer reviewers complete these forms. Ad hoc reviewers are paid a modest honorarium but generally do not travel to meet with other reviewers; and thus they do not complete Expense Report and Invoice Forms. On occasion, ad hoc reviewers may participate in a Web-based panel, thus necessitating completion of an either an SF-1034 or an Honorarium Form. Ad hoc reviewers, retained for special situations, will make up about a 20 percent of all the reviewers retained annually.

FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE

Form	Number of respondents	Annual frequency
Confidentiality Agreement	200	1 per respondent (Total of 200).
Peer Review Forms (Required for all reviewers and they have 2 review assignments on average.)	200	2 per panel respondent (Total of 400).
Expense Report (Only for those reviewers traveling to the review.)	20	1 per respondent (Total of 20).
Honorarium Form (Only for those reviewers paid by check.)	20	1 per respondent (Total of 20).
Panelist Information Forms	200	1 per respondent for each form (Total of 200).
Recommendations Form (For use only for panels not meeting online.)	20	2 per respondent (Total of 40).

ESTIMATED TOTAL ANNUAL BURDEN ON RESPONDENTS

Form (time required to complete)	Number completed annually	Total burden (hours)
Confidentiality Agreement (10 min.)	200	33
Panelist Information Forms (30 min.)	200	100
Peer Review Forms (~6 hrs)	400	2400
Recommendations Form (1 hr)	20	20
Honorarium Form (3 min.)	20	1
Expense Report (30 min.)	20	10

Authority: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. chapter 35.

Comments: The Notice is soliciting comments from members of the public and affected agencies concerning the proposed collection of information to: (1) Evaluate whether the proposed collection is necessary for the proper performance of ARS functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) Evaluate the accuracy of the estimated burden from proposed collection of information; (3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated: September 4, 2012.

Caird Rexroad,

Associate Administrator, Research, Management and Operations, Agricultural Research Service, USDA.

[FR Doc. 2012-23474 Filed 9-21-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-03-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. FSIS-2012-0032]

Testing of Product Samples for *Listeria monocytogenes*: Changes in Procedures

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing changes in procedures for *Listeria (L.) monocytogenes* product sampling programs in ready-to-eat (RTE) meat and poultry products. Starting 60 days after issuance of this notice, FSIS will increase the number of product samples it collects under its Routine Risk-based *L. monocytogenes* (RLm) Sampling Program and its Intensified Verification Testing (IVT) protocol from three to five samples per sampling unit. In addition, FSIS laboratories will composite the five 25-g product samples from the RLm sampling program, which will increase the sample size of the analyzed test portion from 25 g to 125 g. The Agency is effecting these changes to make its sampling procedures more consistent with international practices, to conserve its laboratory resources, and to improve public health. FSIS invites comments on these changes to its sampling programs.

DATES: To receive full consideration, comments on this notice should be received by November 23, 2012.

ADDRESSES: FSIS invites interested persons to submit comments on this

notice. Comments may be submitted by either of the following methods:

- **Federal eRulemaking Portal:** This Web site provides the ability to type short comments directly into the comment field on this Web page or attach a file for lengthier comments. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the on-line instructions at that site for submitting comments.

- **Mail, including CD-ROMs, etc.:** Send to Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Office of Policy and Program Development, Risk, Innovations, and Management Division, Patriots Plaza 3, 8-163A, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Mailstop 3782, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

- **Hand- or courier-delivered submittals:** Deliver to Patriots Plaza 3, 355 E Street SW., Room 8-163A, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

Instructions: All items submitted by mail or electronic mail must include the Agency name and docket number FSIS-2012-0032. Comments received in response to this notice will be made available for public inspection and posted without change, including any personal information, to <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Docket: For access to background documents or comments received, go to the FSIS Docket Room at the address listed above between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rachel Edelstein, Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of Policy and Program Development, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, telephone (202) 204-0495.