

represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.

### Member Nominations

Any interested person or organization may nominate qualified individuals for membership. Interested candidates may nominate themselves. Individuals who wish to be considered for membership on the Urban Ag Advisory Committee must submit a nomination with information, including a background disclosure form (Form AD-755).

Nominations should be typed and include the following:

1. A brief summary, no more than two pages, explaining the nominee's qualifications to serve on the Urban Ag Advisory Committee and addressing the criteria described above.

2. A resume providing the nominee's background, experience, and educational qualifications.

3. A completed background disclosure form (Form AD-755) signed by the nominee [https://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/AD-755-Approved\\_Master-exp-3.31.22\\_508.pdf](https://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/AD-755-Approved_Master-exp-3.31.22_508.pdf).

4. Any recent publications by the nominee relative to urban agriculture or innovations in urban agricultural production (if appropriate).

5. Letters of endorsement (optional).

Send typed nominations to Ronald Harris, Designated Federal Officer, Director of Outreach and Partnerships, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 6006-S, Washington, DC 20250; telephone: (202) 720-6646; email: [Ronald.Harris@usda.gov](mailto:Ronald.Harris@usda.gov). Ronald Harris, the Designated Federal Officer, will acknowledge receipt of nominations.

### Equal Opportunity Statement

To ensure that recommendations of the Urban Ag Advisory Committee take into account the needs of underserved and diverse communities served by the USDA, membership will include, to the extent practicable, individuals representing minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. USDA prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, or disability. Additionally, discrimination on the basis of political beliefs and marital status or family status is also prohibited by statutes enforced by USDA (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternate means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact USDA's Technology and Accessible Resources Give Employment

Today Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Dated: December 28, 2020.

**Cikena Reid,**

*Committee Management Officer, USDA.*

[FR Doc. 2020-29077 Filed 1-6-21; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-16-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Economic Research Service

#### Notice of Intent to Request New Information Collection

**AGENCY:** Economic Research Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) implementing regulations, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (ERS) invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on a proposed new information collection for a study of "Conservation Auction Behavior: Effects of Default Offers and Score Updating."

**DATES:** Written comments on this notice must be received on or before March 8, 2021 to be assured of consideration.

**ADDRESSES:** Address all comments concerning this notice to Steven Wallander, Rural and Resource Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Mail Stop 1800, Washington DC 20250-0002. Submit electronic comments to [steve.wallander@usda.gov](mailto:steve.wallander@usda.gov).

All written comments will be available for public inspection during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern time), Monday through Friday). To arrange access to the comments, contact Steven Wallander at the email address listed above.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval. All comments and replies will be a matter of public record. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the

methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information contact Steven Wallander at the mailing address listed above or by phone: (202) 694-5546.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** *Title:* Conservation Auction Behavior: Effects of Default Offers and Score Updating.

*OMB Number:* To be assigned by OMB.

*Expiration Date:* Three years from approval date.

*Type of Request:* New information collection.

*Abstract:* In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-12) and OMB regulations at 5 CFR part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), this notice announces USDA Economic Research Services' intention to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for a new data collection effort.

This data collection will use an online simulated auction experiment with former participants in the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup and university students to (1) study the anchoring effect of using a high-scoring default offer in the CRP enrollment software rather than an active-choice default, and (2) study how the timing of information about final ranking score in the software influences responsive to baseline ranking scores. Outputs for the experiment will be used to inform potential updates to the CRP software and enrollment software as well as future lab experiments on general conservation auctions.

USDA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) enrolls environmentally sensitive cropland in long-term contracts. Enrolled landowners receive annual rental payments for establishing the approved conservation vegetative cover and not farming the land. Most land is enrolled through the CRP General Signup, a multi-unit, sealed-bid, reverse auction. Offers are ranked on both quality and price. Participants can increase the probability that their offer is accepted by agreeing to a higher quality conservation cover practice or lowering their asking price (annual payment). By encouraging better practices and lower payments, the auction design improves the cost effectiveness of the CRP.

The CRP general signup is a fairly complex decision environment in which participants must decide whether to select one of several dozen possible higher cost but higher scoring practices and whether to ask for lower annual rental payments in order to increase the likely that their offer is accepted into the program. A larger literature in other domains finds that in complex decision environments the initial option presented can have a significant anchoring effect in which final choices are closer to that default option than they would be otherwise. The current CRP general signup software uses an “active choice” default, in which the cover practice and annual rental choices are initially blank. Additional literature on complex decision-making environments finds that the way in which information is provided can influence outcome. The current CRP general signup software provides participants with their ranking score at the end of a series of offer selection screens. Providing live updating of that score earlier in the software could make respondents more sensitive to the underlying program incentives.

Using a stylized version of the enrollment software to create a simulated (artefactual) CRP auction, the study will experimentally test the impacts on final practice and payment offers from two behavioral interventions: (i) A high-quality default starting offer; and (ii) live updates on the offer score at the point of offer selection. In addition, to assess the external validity (generalizability) of conducting experiments with students, a common practice in the literature on conservation auction design, this study will run the experiment with both a sample of university students (drawn from the full population of undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Delaware) and a sample of former participants in the General Signup to test whether the two populations respond differently to the behavioral interventions.

The information to be collected in this proposed initiative is necessary to test the expected behavioral responses to these changes in the auction information environment. Such responses cannot be estimated using observational data because there is not systematic variation in the information environment. In addition, such responses cannot be estimated using mathematical programming models because the underlying psychological drivers of anchoring effects are highly context specific. By using experiments,

we will be able to identify whether the effects observed in other complex decision-making environments are also likely in the context of a large conservation auction like the CRP. We plan to use these experiments to inform possible future redesigns of the CRP general signup software and enrollment process by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), future experiments using simulated conservation auctions, and the overall effort to extrapolated from the larger literature on conservation auction experiments that relied primarily on students as subjects.

Participation in this experiment will be voluntary, and subjects will be recruited using multiple waves of mail and email communications. During each session, subjects will participate in four rounds of a conservation auction: One practice round and three actual rounds. Within each round, subjects will be assigned a different field for potential enrollment and, based on the characteristics of that field, will make a decision about which conservation cover practice to select and what annual rental payment to ask for. Sessions will be conducted using an on-line auction portal developed by the University of Delaware. Participants can sign into the web page and make their offers at any point during a two-week enrollment period. Recruitment will occur in multiple waves until the required number of subjects is met.

Each session will last for an average 30 minutes, including watching an introductory video that explains the auction rules and software. Subjects will receive a show-up fee of \$10. In addition to the show-up fee, subjects will receive compensation based on the decisions they make during the course of the experiment. After the enrollment period for each recruitment wave closes, one of the three auction rounds will be randomly selected and the highest-ranking offers will be “accepted” and receive a virtual payment. The number of winning offers will depend upon the complete pool of bids. Higher quality and lower cost offers will be more likely to get accepted but will receive lower payments if they are accepted. Payment levels are higher for the farmer population than for the student population since the lower level of incentives for students is one of the major reasons that many conservation auction studies use only a student population. We expect the winning bids to receive an average of \$40 for farmers and \$15 for students, not including the show-up fee. In designing our experimental procedures and payment

levels, we took into consideration academic standards, statistical power considerations, budgetary limitations, and discussions between OMB and ERS regarding this and other approved experimental research.

*Authority:* These data will be collected under the legal authority of 7 U.S.C. 2204(a).

ERS intends to protect respondent information under the Privacy Act of 1974 and 7 U.S.C. 2276. ERS has decided not to invoke the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (CIPSEA). The complexity and cost necessary to invoke CIPSEA is not justified given the nature of the collection; the collection will be conducted by the University of Delaware and hosted in non-government owned computer systems, where CIPSEA compliance cannot be assured.

*Affected Public:* Half of the respondents will be farmers or farmland owners who previously participated in at least one CRP general signup. The other half will be students at the University of Delaware.

*Estimated Number of Respondents and Respondent Burden:* Since recruitment will occur through multiple waves to reach the target number of participants, the total respondent burden for participation time will be constant and the total respondent burden for recruitment will depend upon the participation rate. Under lower participation rates, the respondent burden of recruitment is higher. Since students will be recruited through email and farmers will be recruited through mail, the burden per subject for recruitment is slightly lower (3 minutes) for students than for farmers (5 minutes). For all subjects who opt to participate, the expected time to complete the experiment online is 30 minutes.

Under a conservative assumption that the participation rate will be 10 percent of the sampled population for farmers and 25 percent of the sampled population for students, the public respondent burden for this information collection is estimated to be 2,033 hours. The calculations are shown in the table below based on a sample of 10,000 farmers that results in 1,000 farmer participants and a sample of 4,000 students that results in a sample of 1,000 student participants. At higher participation rates of 20 percent for farmers and 33 percent for students, the total respondent burden would be 1,567 hours.

## SAMPLE BURDEN HOURS: 10% RESPONSE RATE FOR FARMERS, 25% RESPONSE RATE FOR STUDENTS

	Sample size	Responses			Non-Response			
		Count	Minutes/ response	Subtotal burden hours	Count	Minutes/ response	Subtotal burden hours	Total burden hours
Farmer Population:								
Recruitment .....	10,000	1,000	5	83.3	9,000	5	750.0	833.3
Participation .....		1,000	30	500.0				500.0
Total .....								1,333.3
Student Population:								
Recruitment .....	4,000	1,000	3	50.0	3,000	3	150.0	200.0
Participation .....		1,000	30	500.0				500.0
Total .....								700.0
Total Both Populations .....								2,033.3

*Comments:* Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed 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 the burden of the proposed collection of information, 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. Comments should be sent to the address in the preamble. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

**Spiro Stefanou,**

*Administrator, Economic Research Service.*

[FR Doc. 2021-00004 Filed 1-6-21; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-18-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Black Hills Resource Advisory Committee

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Black Hills Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) will conduct a virtual meeting. The committee is authorized under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (the Act) and operates in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The purpose of the committee is to improve

collaborative relationships and to provide advice and recommendations to the Forest Service concerning projects and funding consistent with Title II of the Act. RAC information can be found at the following website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/blackhills/workingtogether/advisorycommittees/?cid=STELPRD3807565>.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Thursday, January 28, 2021, at 5:30 p.m.

All meetings are subject to cancellation. For updated status of meeting prior to attendance, please contact the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held virtually along with a conference call line. For virtual meeting information, please contact the person listed under *For Further Information Contact*. Detailed instructions on how to attend the meeting virtually will be sent out via email with a news release approximately one week prior to the meeting.

Written comments may be submitted as described under *Supplementary Information*. All comments, including names and addresses, when provided, are placed in the record and available for public inspection and copying. The public may inspect comments received at the Mystic Ranger District Office. Please call ahead to facilitate entry into the building.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Kelly Warnke, Committee Coordinator, by phone at 605-716-1978 or by email at [kelly.warnke@usda.gov](mailto:kelly.warnke@usda.gov).

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The purpose of the meeting is to further review and recommend projects for

funding under the Secure Rural School allocations to Custer, Lawrence, and Pennington Counties for 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The meeting is open to the public. The agenda will include time for people to make oral statements of three minutes or less. Individuals wishing to provide comments with regards to this meeting's agenda and for comments to be included with the meeting minutes/records, comments must be submitted in writing by Friday January 22, 2021. Anyone who would like to bring related matters to the attention of the committee may file written statements with the committee staff before or after the meeting. Written comments must be sent to Kelly Warnke, Mystic Ranger District, 8221 Mount Rushmore Road, Rapid City, South Dakota 57702; by email to [kelly.warnke@usda.gov](mailto:kelly.warnke@usda.gov), or via facsimile to 605-343-7134.

**Meeting Accommodations:** If you are a person requiring reasonable accommodation, please make requests in advance for sign language interpreting, assistive listening devices, or other reasonable accommodation. For access to the facility or proceedings, please contact the person listed in the section titled *For Further Information Contact*. All reasonable accommodation requests are managed on a case-by-case basis.

Dated: 1/4/2021.

**Cikena Reid,**

*USDA Committee Management Officer.*

[FR Doc. 2021-00024 Filed 1-6-21; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3411-15-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement

#### Public 2501 Stakeholder Call

**AGENCY:** OPPE, USDA.