

language do not slow the momentum of the Agencies' substantial investment in watershed restoration and aquatic habitat improvement; and whether the proposed action meets all applicable laws and regulations including the Oregon and California Lands Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the National Forest Management Act, and the Endangered Species Act, and those statutes' implementing regulations.

Although scoping is not required for supplements to environmental impact statements (40 CFR 1502.9(c)(4)), the Agencies are inviting scoping comments at this time. Comments are sought (1) to help the Agencies identify issues to be addressed in the SEIS; (2) to identify significant issues related to the proposed action; refine the proposed action; (3) to identify reasonable alternatives to the proposed action; and (4) to identify interested and affected persons. For comments to be most useful in this analysis, they should be submitted in writing by the date identified above. To assist the Agencies in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments should be as specific as possible.

The Agencies have no plans to conduct public scoping meetings. However, a scoping letter will be prepared and circulated to affected Federal, State, and local agencies, affected tribes, and individuals and organizations previously expressing an interest in the ACS.

The draft SEIS is expected to be filed with the EPA in February 2003 and will be available for public review. The comment period on the draft SEIS will be 90 days from the date the EPA publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**. It is helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft document. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft SEIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

The Agencies believe, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of the draft SEIS must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and

contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 533 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft SEIS stage, but that are not raised until after completion of the final SEIS, may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 90-day comment period so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Agencies at a time when the Agencies can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final SEIS.

It is expected that the final SEIS will be filed with the EPA approximately July 2003. The Agencies anticipate there will be a Record of Decision signed in August 2003.

Dated: November 20, 2002.

David P. Tenny,

Deputy Under Secretary, Natural Resource and Environment.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Accounting Rules and Guidelines for Forest and Agriculture Greenhouse Gas Offsets

AGENCY: Office of the Chief Economist, Global Change Program Office.

ACTION: Notice of registration for meetings.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture will hold two meetings to solicit input on the accounting rules and guidelines for forest and agriculture greenhouse gas offsets that will be used in the Department of Energy's 1605(b) greenhouse gas reporting system. These meetings will address technical methodological issues associated with preparing estimates of greenhouse gas offsets from agriculture and forestry activities and reporting them under DOE's 1605(b) program.

DATES: The Department will hold the meetings on the following dates:

1. Agriculture Accounting Rules and Guidelines, January 14-15, 2003, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Riverdale, MD.
2. Forest Accounting Rules and Guidelines, January 23, 2003, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Riverdale, MD.

ADDRESSES: The workshops will be held at the Department of Agriculture Center

located at 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Registration Information: Persons interested in registering for the meetings or in obtaining more information about USDA's efforts to develop accounting rules and guidelines for forest and agriculture greenhouse gas offsets should visit the following web site: <http://www.usda.gov/agency/oce/gcpo/greenhousegasreporting.htm>.

The website will also be used to make available draft and final meeting agendas, information on lodging, and any background papers or other information made available before the meetings.

Technical Information: William Holhenstein, Director, Global Change Program Office, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 112-A, Whitten Federal Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3810.

(Note: due to precautionary screening of mail to Federal offices, some delays should be expected.)

Logistical Information: Inquiries regarding the logistics for these meetings may be e-mailed to sharon_barcellos@grad.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On February 14, 2002, the President directed the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency, to develop accounting rules and guidelines for crediting sequestration projects, taking into account emerging domestic and international approaches. Given the interactions between carbon sequestration and other greenhouse gas fluxes from land uses, USDA intends to develop accounting rules and guidelines for carbon and other greenhouse gas fluxes from land use practices (crops, animal agriculture, range and pasture, and forests).

On February 14, 2002, the President also directed the Secretary of Energy, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to proposed improvements to the current voluntary emission reduction registration program under section 1605(b) of the 1992 Energy Policy Act within 120 days. These improvements will enhance measurement accuracy, reliability, and verifiability, working with and taking into account emerging domestic and international approaches.

To achieve these objectives it will be necessary to supplement or supplant the

existing guidelines with new, more rigorous reporting requirements. On July 8, 2002, the Secretaries of Energy, Agriculture, and Commerce, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency wrote to be the President stating that the improvements to the existing Voluntary Greenhouse Gas Reporting Programs should:

1. Develop fair, objective, and practical methods for reporting baselines, reporting boundaries, calculating real results, and awarding transferable credits for actions that lead to real reductions.
2. Standardize widely accepted, transparent accounting methods.
3. Support independent verification of registry reports.
4. Encourage reporters to report greenhouse gas intensity (emissions per unit of output) as well as emissions or emissions reductions.
5. Encourage corporate or entity-wide reporting.
6. Provide credits for actions to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as well as for actions to reduce emissions.
7. Develop a process for evaluating the extent to which past reductions may qualify for credit.
8. Assure the voluntary reporting program is an effective tool for reaching the 18 percent greenhouse gas intensity goal by 2012.
9. Factor in international strategies as well as State-level efforts.
10. Minimize transactions costs for reporters and administrative costs for the Government, where possible, without compromising the foregoing recommendations.

The meetings are intended to assist the Department in assessing the technical and methodological issues associated with developing new forest and agriculture accounting rules and guidelines. The meetings will provide an opportunity for open dialogue among farmers, forest land owners, farm groups and associations, businesses, industry associations, conservation organizations, environmental groups, institutions, individuals, and others affected interests. We intend to invite comments to ensure the full range of views and opinions are expressed. We also intend to provide an opportunity for those present to address the meeting. We also will accept and give full consideration to written views submitted including written responses to background materials prepared for the meetings. Written comments should be submitted to ghgcomments@oce.usda.gov.

Full agendas and various other materials will be made available prior to

the workshop at: <http://www.usda.gov/agency/oce/gcpo/greenhousegasreporting.htm>.

Dated: November 15, 2002.

Keith Collins,
Chief Economist.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

Information Collection; Horse Breeder Loan Program

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; request for comment.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Farm Service Agency is seeking comments from all interested individuals and organizations on the extension of currently approved information collection that supports the Horse Breeder Loan program. This program is to provide loans to the horse breeders who have suffered economic losses resulting from Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome (MLRS).

DATES: Comments must be received in writing on or before January 24, 2003, to be assured of consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: Comments concerning this notice should be addressed to Farm Service Agency, USDA, Attn: Cathy Quayle, Senior Loan Officer, Loan Making Division, Mail Stop 0522, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0522.

Comments also may be submitted via facsimile to (202) 720-6797 or by e-mail to: cathy_quayle@wdc.usda.gov.

The public may inspect comments received at 1280 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20024 in Suite 240 during normal business hours. Visitors are encouraged to call ahead to (202) 690-4018 to facilitate entry to the building.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Cathy Quayle, Loan Making Division, (202) 690-4018 and cathy_quayle@wdc.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 a.m. and 8 p.m., eastern standard time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Description of Information Collection

Title: Horse Breeder Loan Program.

OMB Number: 0560-0221.

Expiration Date of Approval:
December 31, 2002.

Type of Request: Extension with no revision.

Abstract: This information collection is necessary to support the FSA Horse Breeder Loan program, which is authorized under the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Appropriation Act, 2002. The respondents are the horse breeders who suffered losses resulting from MLRS. Horse breeders must submit the forms and other information to FSA loan officials to verify the evidence of losses before making eligibility and financial determinations on their loan request. If the information is not collected from each horse breeder, FSA loan official will not be able to make eligibility and feasibility decisions.

Estimate of Annual Burden: 1.572 hours per responses.

Estimated Annual Number of Respondents: 800.

Estimated Annual Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.50.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 1258 hours.

Comment Is Invited

Comment is invited on: (1) Whether this collection of information is necessary for the stated purposes and the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical or scientific utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses when provided, will be a matter of public record. Comments will be summarized and included in the submission for Office of Management and Budget approval.

Dated: November 13, 2002.

Teresa C. Lasseter,

Acting Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

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