

Notices

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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

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Notice of Intent To Establish an Information Collection

AGENCY: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension 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) regulations (5 CFR part 1320) which implement the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), this notice announces the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service's (CSREES) intention to request approval to establish an information collection for the CSREES Current Research Information System (CRIS).

DATES: Submit comments on or before September 4, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments to Jason Hitchcock, E-Government Program Leader, Information Systems and Technology Management; CSREES/USDA; Mail Stop 2216; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20250-2216. Comments may be sent electronically to: jhitchcock@csrees.usda.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jason Hitchcock at (202) 720-4343 or via the above e-mail address.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: CSREES Current Research Information System (CRIS).

OMB Number: 0524-NEW.

Expiration Date of Current Approval: Not applicable.

Type of Request: Intent to seek approval to establish an information collection for three years.

Abstract: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA),

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) administers several competitive, peer-reviewed research, education, and extension programs, under which awards of a high-priority are made. These programs are authorized pursuant to the authorities contained in the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grants Act of August 4, 1965, as amended (7 U.S.C. 450i); the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3101 *et seq.*); the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601 *et seq.*); and other legislative authorities.

CSREES also administers several formula-funded research programs. The programs are authorized pursuant to the authorities contained in the Hatch Act of 1887 (7 U.S.C. 361a-i); McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Act of October 10, 1962 (16 U.S.C. 582a *et seq.*); section 1445 of NARETPA (7 U.S.C. 3222); and section 1433 of NARETPA (7 U.S.C. 3195).

The Current Research Information System (CRIS) is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's documentation and reporting system for ongoing agricultural, food science, human nutrition, and forestry research. CRIS Form AD-416, Research Resume; CRIS Form AD-417, Classification of Research; CRIS Form AD-419, Research Funds and Staff Support; and CRIS Form AD-421, Progress Report constitute an information collection for publicly-supported research projects as set forth in 7 CFR Parts 3400-3419. This information collection is necessary in order to provide descriptive information regarding individual research activities and integrated activities, to document expenditures and staff support for the activities, and to monitor the progress and impact of such activities.

The historical mission of CRIS, broadly stated, is to document the research activities of the USDA and the State agricultural research system partners, to satisfy a variety of reporting requirements; and to provide access to research information. This mission supports one of the CSREES' primary functions, stated in the agency strategic plan, of providing program leadership to identify, develop, and manage programs to support university-based and other institutional research.

The boundaries and scope of the CRIS mission are being expanded each year toward a more comprehensive purpose. As such, the information collected for CRIS is utilized in an essentially unlimited number of ways for a wide array of purposes. Generally, CRIS provides ready access to information through public web accessible data as well as individually requested, customized reports and services for agency officials, program leaders, administrators and managers. The information provided helps users to keep abreast of the latest developments in agricultural, food science, human nutrition and forestry research; track resource utilization in specific target areas of research; plan for future research activities; plan for resource allocation to research programs; avoid costly duplication of research effort; aid in coordination of research efforts addressing similar problems in different locations; and aid researchers in establishing valuable contacts within the research community.

Descriptive information pertaining to documented projects is available to the general public as well as the agricultural research community contributing to CRIS. Limited financial information is available on individual grant projects and cooperative agreements as well as summary financial information through the CRIS web site.

Cooperating institutions, including the state agricultural experiment stations, state forestry schools, 1862 land-grant institutions and 1890 land-grant institutions have access to all the data pertaining to their institutions. Many institutions take advantage of this access utilizing CRIS system facilities to manage the research programs at their institutions.

In addition, CSREES staff members can request specialized reports directly from the CRIS staff. These requests can include financial disclosure pertaining to a particular subject area or targeted program. The nature of this type of request characterizes one of the strengths of the CRIS information collection. The system collects obligations and expenditures on individual projects; however, information can be retrieved and aggregated based on subject areas or targeted programs, and corresponding financial information can be tabulated accordingly. The inclusion of subject-