

accountability while reducing the overall burden hours for reporting.

Respondents: Respondents will be the 57 1862 land-grant institutions and the 18 1890 land-grant institutions, including Tuskegee University and West Virginia State College, who will provide a FY 2005–FY 2006 Plan of Work Update; and will report on the accomplishments and results of the original 5-year plan of work and the FY 2005–2006 Plan of Work Update annually to CSREES.

Estimate of Burden: The amendments to AREERA require a plan of work for funds that are distributed on an annual basis. To reduce the burden on respondents, CSREES proposes to extend the current 5-Year Plan of Work (*i.e.*, FY 2000–FY 2004) for two years by allowing the 5-Year Plan of Work to be amended by adding the FY 2005–FY 2006 Plan of Work Update.

The total reporting and recordkeeping requirements for the submission of the “FY 2005–FY 2006 Plan of Work Update” is estimated to average 242 hours per response.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 75.

Estimated Number of Responses: 95.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 22,990 hours.

Frequency of Responses: Once for the FY 2005–FY 2006.

The total annual reporting and recordkeeping requirements for the “Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results” is estimated to average 851 hours per response.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 75.

Estimated Number of Responses: 95.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 80,845 hours.

Frequency of Responses: Annually.

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; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of collection of information on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: CSREES–USDA; Planning and Accountability, Office of the Administrator; Mail Stop 2214; 1400

Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250–2214 by October 14, 2003, or to the Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20502. Reference should be made to the volume, page, and date of this **Federal Register** publication.

Background and Purpose

The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) proposes to revise the Guidelines for State Plans of Work for the Agricultural Research and Extension Formula Funds which implement the plan-of-work reporting requirements enacted in the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA), Pub. L. 105–185, by adding Part V, FY 2005–FY 2006 Plan of Work Update. CSREES is proposing that the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions be required to submit a Plan of Work Update only for FY 2005 and FY 2006, instead of submitting a new 5-Year Plan of Work for FY 2005–FY 2009, as CSREES needs to incorporate the recommendations from the USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG) Audit No. 13001–3–Te, CSREES Implementation of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) into the 5-Year Plan of Work. Consequently, once the final audit recommendations are made, CSREES needs time to develop a viable electronic option for compliance with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA). Currently, institutions are submitting their reports via e-mail in WordPerfect file format, Microsoft Word file format, or ASCII file format, and CSREES proposes to have the institutions to do so until a viable electronic option is available.

The objective of the USDA OIG Audit is to determine whether CSREES established effective controls to ensure land-grant institutions implemented AREERA provisions in accordance with the law and regulations. The audit began on November 8, 2002, and the fieldwork is still being conducted. CSREES would like to consider the findings and recommendations of that audit in the design of the next 5-year plan of work. Time also is needed for CSREES to consult with its partnering institutions—1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions—in any redesign of the plan-of-work reporting system or extensive revision of the existing Guidelines for the State Plans of Work. This 2-year period will allow for the consideration of the USDA OIG audit findings and recommendations,

opportunity to consult with the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions on any extensive revisions to the current Guidelines for State Plans of Work, and the development of a viable electronic option in compliance with GPEA.

CSREES also is proposing to change the due date of the Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results from March 1 to April 1. On December 28, 2000 (65 FR 82317), CSREES changed the original due date for the Annual Reports of Accomplishments and Results from December 31 to the following March 1 after consultation with the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions. CSREES is now proposing to extend the due date for the Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results to April 1, 2004, for FY 2003; April 1, 2005, for FY 2004; April 1, 2006, for FY 2005; and April 1, 2007, for FY 2006.

Pursuant to the plan of work requirements enacted in the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998, the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service hereby to add Part V, FY 2005–FY 2006 Plan of Work Update, to the Guidelines for State Plans of Work for Agricultural Research and Extension Formula Funds as follows:

Guidelines for State Plans of Work for Agricultural Research and Extension Formula Funds

Table of Contents

V. Submission of the FY 2005–2006 Plan of Work Update

A. General

1. Planning Option
2. Period Covered
3. Projected Resources
4. Submission and Due Date
5. Certification

B. FY 2005–2006 Plan of Work Update

Evaluation by CSREES

1. Schedule
2. Review Criteria

The FY 2005–FY 2006 Plan of Work Update is a prospective plan that extends coverage of the original 5-Year Plan of Work (*i.e.*, FY 2000–FY 2004) to include FY 2005–FY 2006. The FY 2005–2006 Plan of Work Update should be prepared for an institution’s individual functions (*i.e.*, research or extension activities), for an individual institution (including the planning of research and extension activities), or for state-wide activities (a 5-year research and/or extension plan of work for all the eligible institutions in a State), as they were submitted in the original 5-Year Plan of Work that was due on July 15, 1999. Each FY 2005–FY 2006 Plan of Work Update must reflect the content of the program(s) funded by Federal agricultural research and extension