

Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250. Request should be received at least 3 business days before the meeting.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michael Schechtman, Designated Federal Official, Office of the Deputy Secretary, Telephone (202) 720-3817; Fax (202) 690-4265; e-mail mschechtman@ars.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The second meeting of the AC21 has been scheduled for September 15-16, 2003. The AC21 consists of 18 members representing the biotechnology industry, the seed industry, international plant genetics research, farmers, food manufacturers, commodity processors and shippers, environmental and consumer groups, along with academic researchers including a bioethicist. In addition, representatives from the Departments of Commerce, Health and Human Services, and State, and the Environmental Protection Agency, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the Office of the United States Trade Representative serve as "ex officio" members. The Committee meeting will be held from 8:30 am to 5 p.m. on each day. The topics to be discussed will include: (1) Approval of a framework for the AC21's main report; (2) review of a draft outline for the introduction to that report; (3) development of a plan for the preparation of the report and organization of work groups; and (4) continuation of discussion on impacts of biotechnology along the overall food production and distribution system, focusing on potential impacts of new value-added biotechnology products with direct consumer benefits.

Background information regarding the work of the AC21 will be available on the USDA Web site at <http://www.usda.gov/agencies/biotech/ac21.html>. On September 15, 2003, if time permits, reasonable provision will be made for oral presentations of no more than five minutes each in duration. The meeting will be open to the public, but space is limited. If you would like to attend the meetings, you must register by contacting Ms. Dianne Harmon at (202) 720-4074, by fax at (202) 720-3191 or by e-mail at ddharmon@ars.usda.gov at least 5 days prior to the meeting. Please provide your name, title, business affiliation, address, telephone, and fax number when you register. If you require a sign language interpreter or other special accommodation due to disability, please

indicate those needs at the time of registration.

Edward B. Knippling,
Acting Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection—Certified State Mediation Program

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the intention of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to request an extension of approval for the information collection used in support of the Certified State Mediation Program under title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations part 785. The collection of information is used by FSA to determine whether a State meets the eligibility criteria to be a recipient of grant funds, and to determine if the grant is being administered appropriately. Lack of adequate information to make these determinations could result in the improper administration and appropriation of Federal grant funds.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before October 21, 2003 to be assured consideration.

ADDRESSES: Comments concerning this notice should be addressed to Chester Bailey, Mediation Coordinator, USDA, FSA, Outreach Staff, Room 3716-S, Stop 0511, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250 and to: the Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503. Comments may be submitted by e-mail to chester.bailey@wdc.usda.gov. Copies of the information collection may be obtained by contacting Chester Bailey at (202) 720-1471.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chester Bailey, FSA, Outreach Staff, telephone (202) 720-1471.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Certified Mediation Program.

OMB Control Number: 0560-0165.

Expiration Date of Approval: September 10, 2003.

Type of Request: Extension of Currently Approved Information Collection.

Abstract: This information is needed by FSA to effectively administer the Certified State Mediation Program in accordance with Subtitles A and B of Title V of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 (Pub. L. 100-233). FSA collects the information by mail, phone, fax, in person, or via the Internet. Although other institutions, public and private, generally require and collect information similar to that requested by FSA, there is a wide diversity in reporting practices.

The information to be collected includes an application for certification, re-verification for subsequent annual approval, SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance, audit reports and financial management systems and reporting requirements.

The information requested is reported annually and is necessary for the FSA to determine eligibility, and to administer the mediation grant program in an equitable and cost-effective manner.

Estimate of Burden: The public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to average 34 hours per respondent.

Respondents: State agencies.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 29.

Estimate Number of Responses per Respondent: 6.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 986 hours.

Comment is invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the above stated purposes and the proper performance of FSA, 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 being collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automate, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collation techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval.

Signed in Washington, DC, on August 15, 2003.

James R. Little,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

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