

approximate value of \$668 million. Based on average sheep imports of 39,106 head per year over the 1991–2000 period, U.S. sheep imports represent less than 1 percent of total U.S. domestic production. In 2000, there were approximately 436,000 Angora goats in the United States with a value of about \$17 million. Based on average goat imports of 1,459 head per year over the 1995–2000 period, U.S. goat imports comprise less than 1 percent of total U.S. domestic production, and represent about 3.1 percent of the value of domestically-produced goats (signifying the generally higher value of imported goats).

APHIS and other Federal agencies are required to evaluate whether proposed regulations are likely to have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. Privately owned and operated quarantine facilities have been used from time to time for the importation of sheep and goats into the United States. However, no such approved facilities are currently in operation. Therefore, the standards contained in this proposed rule would not adversely affect any such entities, large or small. However, should one or more privately owned quarantine facilities be approved for operation, importers should benefit by having additional options for the placement of ruminants to be imported into the United States. And, particularly in the case of minimum security facilities, importers may have the opportunity to import ruminants from certain regions in larger lot sizes as compared to the current situation of having the animals placed in an APHIS indoor quarantine facility.

Under these circumstances, the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has determined that this action would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

Executive Order 12988

This proposed rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. If this proposed rule is adopted: (1) All State and local laws and regulations that are inconsistent with this rule will be preempted; (2) no retroactive effect will be given to this rule; and (3) administrative proceedings will not be required before parties may file suit in court challenging this rule.

National Environmental Policy Act

An environmental assessment has not been prepared for this proposed rule. Because the environmental impacts that could result from implementation of this proposal would vary according to

the location and design of the facility being approved, APHIS has determined site-specific environmental assessments must be conducted for each privately owned quarantine facility for ruminants prior to approval of the facility. APHIS will publish a notice in the **Federal Register** for each environmental assessment we conduct in this regard if this proposed rule is finalized, and we would invite public comment on each site-specific environmental assessment.

Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with section 3507(d) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), the information collection or recordkeeping requirements included in this proposed rule have been submitted for approval to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Please send written comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB, Attention: Desk Officer for APHIS, Washington, DC 20503. Please state that your comments refer to Docket No. 00–022–1. Please send a copy of your comments to: (1) Docket No. 00–022–1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, suite 3C03, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737–1238, and (2) Clearance Officer, OCIO, USDA, room 404–W, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250. A comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication of this proposed rule.

We are proposing standards for the establishment and operation of privately owned quarantine facilities for imported ruminants prior to their release into the United States. Satisfying the proposed requirements in this rule would entail several information collection activities, including an application for facility approval, a compliance agreement explaining the conditions under which the facility must be operated, certification that the facility meets all applicable environmental regulations, and maintenance of certain records covering quarantine operations.

We are soliciting comments from the public (as well as affected agencies) concerning our proposed information collection and recordkeeping requirements. These comments will help us:

- (1) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper performance of our agency's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- (2) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection, including the

validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(4) Minimize the burden of the information collection on those who are to respond (such as through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology; *e.g.*, permitting electronic submission of responses).

Estimate of burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 9.64 hours per response.

Respondents: Operators of privately owned quarantine facilities for ruminants.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 25.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 1.8.

Estimated annual number of responses: 45.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 434 hours. (Due to averaging, the total annual burden hours may not equal the product of the annual number of responses multiplied by the reporting burden per response.)

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Mrs. Celeste Sickles, APHIS' Information Collection Coordinator, at (301) 734–7477.

Government Paperwork Elimination Act Compliance

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is committed to compliance with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA), which requires Government agencies in general to provide the public the option of submitting information or transacting business electronically to the maximum extent possible. For information pertinent to GPEA compliance related to this proposed rule, please contact Mrs. Celeste Sickles, APHIS' Information Collection Coordinator, at (301) 734–7477.

List of Subjects in 9 CFR Part 93

Animal diseases, Imports, Livestock, Poultry and poultry products, Quarantine, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Accordingly, we propose to amend 9 CFR part 93 as follows: