

3. *Procedural Safeguards:* In order to access STARS, each authorized individual is given a personal access ID and password. The individual's password must be changed at least every 45 days or whenever the individual feels it might have been compromised.

Access to personal information contained in the STARS database and to the paper record files is restricted to those individuals who have been authorized by FNS and who have a need to know such information in the performance of their official duties in administering the Food Stamp Act and other Federal and State laws. SSNs cannot be viewed on screen in STARS by those individuals who are not specifically authorized to view them.

FNS personnel, project officers, and contract officers oversee compliance with these requirements. When appropriate, FNS personnel will review the site facilities to ensure that records have been maintained in accordance with the terms of this notice.

RETENTION AND DISPOSAL:

In STARS, the personal identifying information is maintained indefinitely. The applications for authorization and reauthorization are kept in the FNS field offices for three years and then destroyed pursuant to the applicable document retention and disposal schedule.

SYSTEM MANAGER(S) AND ADDRESS:

Thomas O'Connor, Director, Benefit Redemption Division, Food and Nutrition Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Room 706, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE:

Any individual may request information regarding this system of records from the System Manager. The request must be in writing.

RECORD ACCESS PROCEDURES:

An individual who wishes to request access to records in the system which pertains to him or her may submit a written request to the System Manager. The envelope and the letter should be marked, "Privacy Act Request". An individual may be required to reference the record by furnishing name, address, Social Security Number, and/or other identifiers needed by FNS.

CONTESTING RECORD PROCEDURES:

Individuals desiring to contest or amend information maintained in the system should direct their request to the System Manager. The request should include, as appropriate, the reasons for contesting it, and the proposed

amendment to the information with supporting information to show how the record is inaccurate, incomplete, untimely, or irrelevant.

RECORD SOURCE CATEGORIES:

Information in this system comes from the authorization and reauthorization applications of stores and other entities which are currently participating in the Food Stamp Program, as well as information on file for those entities which have previously participated in the program. Personal information in this system of records is also obtained from the owners and officers of such entities as reported on the authorization and reauthorization applications.

The STARS database also keeps a food stamp redemption history on such entities. The database maintains the dollar amount of food stamp benefits accepted by each entity currently authorized or previously authorized.

EXEMPTIONS CLAIMED FOR THE SYSTEM:

None.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 99-002N]

"Certified Organic By" Labeling on Meat and Poultry Products

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Availability of labeling guidance.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing the availability of guidance concerning the use of the claim "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" on the labeling of meat and poultry products. The claim "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" will be permitted on the labeling of meat and poultry products if the labeling is submitted to FSIS for approval, the labeling meets certain criteria, and the labeling submitted is accompanied by specified certification documentation that has been provided by the certifying entity to the meat or poultry producer seeking labeling approval.

ADDRESSES: Copies of FSIS's labeling guidance concerning the use of the claim "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" are available from the FSIS Docket Clerk in the FSIS Docket Room, Room 102, Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20250-

3700, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and on FSIS's homepage at www.fsis.usda.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Robert Post, Director, Labeling and Additives Policy Division, Office of Policy, Program Development and Evaluation, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, (202) 205-0279.

Background

The United States Congress passed the Organic Foods Protection Act of 1990 (1) to establish national standards governing the marketing of certain agricultural products as organically produced, (2) to assure consumers that organically produced products meet a defined, consistent standard, and (3) to facilitate commerce in organically produced fresh and processed food. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), published a proposed rule in the **Federal Register** (62 FR 65850) on December 16, 1997, to permit the use of the term "organic" on the labeling of certain agricultural products. AMS received approximately 280,000 public comments in response to the proposal, which raised many complex issues. AMS has decided to publish a revised proposed rule that will address those issues and to seek further input and comment from interested parties.

A number of meat and poultry producers asked FSIS to permit the marketing of meat and poultry products bearing the claim "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" during the pendency of the rulemaking and before AMS issues its final rule. Because AMS's decision to issue a revised proposal and to seek further public comment before finalizing the organic standards rule will likely take some time, FSIS has decided in the interim to permit the use of the claim "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" on the labeling of meat and poultry products under certain conditions.

As indicated in FSIS's guidance documents, to use the claim "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" on the labeling of a meat or poultry product, processors will have to submit the labeling they want to use to FSIS for approval. Processors will also have to submit to FSIS, simultaneously with the labeling for which they are seeking approval, specified certification documentation provided to them by the certifying entity, including documentation that demonstrates that the certifying entity has standards for what constitutes an organic product, and that the certifying entity has a system for ensuring that that the

product it certifies as organic meets the standards it has established. The specific certification documentation that must be submitted to FSIS includes: (1) The name of the certified meat or poultry product and/or certified ingredient used in the meat or poultry product; (2) the certifying entity's name and address; (3) the name and signature of the responsible official of the certifying entity; (4) the date of certification, and (5) documentation from the certifying entity that (a) its criteria, i.e., standards, for what constitutes an organic product have been met by the product or ingredient for which labeling approval is being sought and (b) that the certifying entity employs a system for evaluating ongoing compliance with the criteria, i.e., standards, it has established.

As also indicated in FSIS's guidance document regarding this policy, the statement "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" must be followed by the name of the certifying entity on the labeling of a meat or poultry product. Upon approval, the claim "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" may appear anywhere on the labeling of a meat or poultry product in regard to the meat or poultry product portion certified and in regard to any nonmeat ingredients so certified. All words in the claim are to be contiguous and of the same size, style, and type. Further, as indicated in FSIS's guidance document, FSIS will also continue to permit the use of approved animal production claims and an approved claim of "natural" on the labeling of meat and poultry products.

In allowing the claim "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" to appear on the labeling of a meat or poultry product, FSIS is not defining the term "organic." AMS, supported by the National Organic Standards Board, is responsible for carrying out the Department's program under the Organic Foods Protection Act to define the term "organic" and to establish the circumstances in which it can be applied to agricultural products, including meat and poultry products.

Applications for approval of labeling bearing the claim "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" should be sent to the Labeling and Additives Policy Division, Office of Policy, Program Development and Evaluation, Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA, Room 602, Cotton Annex, Washington, DC 20250-3700. Inquiries regarding labeling claims, including the labeling claim "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" or animal production claims, may be directed to Dr. Robert Post, Director, Labeling and Additives Policy

Division. Staff of the Labeling and Additives Policy Division may be reached by telephone, at (202) 205-0279, for consultation.

Paperwork Requirements

Abstract: FSIS has reviewed the paperwork and recordkeeping requirements in this notice in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act. FSIS has submitted a request for an emergency clearance of these paperwork and recordkeeping requirements to OMB.

This notice, in conjunction with existing requirements, means that meat and poultry producers who want to market meat and poultry products that bear the labeling claim "certified organic by (a certifying entity)" will have to submit the labeling to FSIS for approval, along with the specified certification documentation that has been provided to the meat or poultry producer by the certifying entity. The certifying entity must have standards that list the criteria a meat or poultry product must meet to be certified organic and must have a system for ensuring that the product it certifies as organic meets those standards.

Estimate of Burden: FSIS estimates that it will take meat and poultry producers 2 hours to design and develop modified product labels. FSIS estimates that it will take certifying entities 40 hours to develop their organic standards and prepare their certification documentation.

Respondents: Meat and poultry producers, and certifying entities.

Estimated number of Respondents: 200 meat and poultry producers, and 44 certifying entities.

Estimated number of Responses per Respondent: FSIS estimates that each producer would modify approximately 4 product labels. Certifying entities would give their certification documentation to each meat and poultry producer once.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 3,360 hours. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the 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 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 through use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other

technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Lee Puricelli, Paperwork Specialist, see address above, and Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20253.

Done at Washington, DC on: April 5, 1999.

Thomas J. Billy,

Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Information Collection; Request for Comments; Special Use Administration

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Forest Service announces its intent to request an extension of a currently approved information collection for the administration of special uses on National Forest System lands. The information helps the Forest Service ensure that the authorized use of Federal land is in the public interest and compatible with the mission of the agency. Respondents will include individuals, groups, organizations, businesses, corporations, and Federal, State, and local governments.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing on or before June 11, 1999.

ADDRESSES: All comments should be addressed to: Director, Lands Staff (mail stop 1124), Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090 or email mscheibe/wo@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark Scheibel, Lands Staff, at (202) 205-1264.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The forms described in this request for extension of an information collection are used by the agency to issue and administer special use permits to use or occupy National Forest System lands. The data collected will be evaluated by the Forest Service to ensure that the authorized use of Federal land is in the public interest and is compatible with the mission of the agency. The data will help identify environmental and social impacts of special uses and will ascertain whether the agency is receiving a fair market