

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

Foreign Agricultural Service

Notice of Public Meeting on U.S. Participation in the 16th Annual Meeting of the International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation

AGENCY: Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: FAS is informing the public of a meeting to be held Thursday, October 7, 1999, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Washington, DC. The purpose of this meeting is to solicit public comment on U.S. participation in the 16th annual meeting of the International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation (ICGFI), October 25–27, 1999, in Antalya, Turkey, including the continued U.S. participation, future

activities (Plan of Work), U.S. level of contributions (funding), and ICGFI's role. It is also to seek public input in identifying any new issues of concern that should be considered.

Representatives from past delegations will also be present to apprise the public of the background of ICGFI, its mandate, past contributions and to respond to questions. ICGFI was established under the joint aegis of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The functions of ICGFI are:

1. To evaluate global developments in the field of food irradiation;
2. To provide a focal point of advice on the application of food irradiation to Member States and the three Organizations; and
3. To furnish information, as required, through the Organizations, to the Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Expert Committee on the Wholesomeness of Irradiated Food and the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

DATES: The public meeting date is Thursday, October 7, 1999, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., Washington, DC in Room 5066 South Building. Written comments should be submitted by October 5, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Foreign Agricultural Service, International Trade Policy, Food Safety and Technical Services Division, Room 5545, South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250, (202) 720–1301; or e-mail ofsts@fas.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Topics to be Discussed at the Public Meeting Include the Following

Should the United States continue to participate in ICGFI?

What are the benefits to the U.S. taxpayer? Industry? Government?

What are the drawbacks or costs we should consider?

Should the United States continue to support ICGFI financially?

If the answer is yes, how should ICGFI be funded?

Should the United States Government continue to contribute to ICGFI?

If yes, should we continue at the same level, increase, or decrease our contributions?

Should contributions continue to come only from the Government, or should industry contribute as well (or in place of)?

Should the proposed "Programme of Work and Budget for 2000" be approved?

Programme of Work	Estimated Budget (US\$)
1. International Trade:	
(a) Food Irradiation Process Control School (FIPCOS) for Operators of Irradiation Facilities and Food Inspectors	35,000
(b) Seminar on Trade Opportunities for Irradiated Foods for Asia and the Pacific	25,000
(c) Workshop on Facilitating Trade in Irradiated Food with the European Union	20,000
2. Legislation:	
(a) Amendments to Codex General Standard for Irradiated Foods (through the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants)	5,000
(b) Proposed Amendment to the Labeling Provisions on Irradiated Foods (through the Codex Committee on Food Labelling) ..	3,000
(c) Publication of revised ICGFI Codes of Good Irradiation Practices (GIP)	(1)
3. Information Transfer:	
(a) Publication of Brochure on Application of "High-Dose Irradiation of Food"	(1)
(b) Publication of Education Materials on Food Irradiation	5,000
4. Database:	
(a) Revise database on list of clearance of irradiated food	(2)
(b) Update current database: national regulations, food irradiation facilities, authorized packaging, materials, trainees, etc.	(2)
5. Administration:	
(a) One professional staff (part-time)	45,000
(b) One support staff	60,000
(c) Travel	10,000
(d) Miscellaneous (telephone, shipping, etc.)	5,000
Total (cash)	213,000

¹ In-kind.

² No-cost.

Are there any other topics we think ICGFI should address?

Background Information on ICGFI

What is ICGFI?

An independent body composed of government-designated experts on food irradiation.

How was ICGFI formed?

In 1982, the Directors General of FAO, IAEA and WHO invited Member States to consider forming a consultative group to focus in international co-operation in food irradiation. Upon receipt of a favorable response from 44 Member States, those present at a meeting in 1983 drafted a Declaration establishing the International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation (ICGFI). ICGFI, composed of experts or other participants designated by each government, was established in 1984 for an initial period of 5 years.

How is ICGFI organized?

FAO, IAEA and WHO, through the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture based at the IAEA, Vienna, serve as ICGFI's Secretariat.

What are the functions of ICGFI?

1. to evaluate global developments in the field of food irradiation;
2. to provide a focal point of advice on the application of food irradiation to Member States and the three Organizations; and
3. to furnish information, as required, through the Organizations, to the Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Expert Committee on the Wholesomeness of Irradiated Food and the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Who determines the priorities?

ICGFI funds and operates its own programs, focusing on developing policy guidelines related to the safety assurance of the process, legislation, public information, economic feasibility, food safety, and international trade.

How does ICGFI acquire funding?

Member State governments pledge, or arrange for participants to pledge to make voluntary contributions in cash or in kind, for carrying out the activities of the Consultative Group. The Consultative Group may accept voluntary contributions in cash or in kind from Non-Member State governments and from organizations whose objectives are consistent with those of the Consultative Group.

What are the guidelines for donations to ICGFI?

1. IAEA rules govern the acceptance of gifts of services, equipment, facilities and money.
2. Voluntary contributions may be offered to the Agency by: United

Nations Member State governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental sources.

3. Contributions may not exceed US \$100,000 or its equivalent per year.

How much does the United States contribute?

Various Departments and Agencies have together contributed \$30,000 per year to ICGFI.

How frequently does ICGFI meet?

ICGFI convenes annual meetings to develop technical recommendations and to consider its program of work and budget. At the 10th Annual Meeting held at WHO Headquarters in Geneva from November 2-4, 1993, the group's experts recommended that the ICGFI mandate be extended for a further 5 years until May 1999.

How much longer does ICGFI's mandate last?

Many of the activities set out for ICGFI in the original mandate have been accomplished. However, a Task Force identified six areas of activity in which further work is needed. In October 1998 at the 15th Annual Meeting, the mandate of the ICGFI was extended to another 3 years, i.e. May 1999 to May 2002. The ICGFI program will be co-ordinated by a Management Committee and will be refocused, putting emphasis on international trade, information exchange, high dose irradiation and seminars/training.

What kind of training is ICGFI involved with?

An example is the FAO/IAEA/WHO International Conference on Irradiation to Ensure the Safety and Quality of Food, in Antalya, Turkey, October 19-22, 1999. This Conference will review achievements on food irradiation during the 20th century and examine the role of irradiation to ensure the safety and quality of food in trade. Irradiation is increasingly accepted and applied as a sanitary and phytosanitary treatment of food in trade. Currently, some 50 countries have approved one or more irradiated food items or classes of food for consumption and over 30 countries are actually applying the technology in practice. The number of irradiation facilities available for treating food has increased in recent years with many more under construction or planned. Consumers are getting accurate information and are beginning to appreciate the benefit of irradiated food.

Who belongs to ICGFI?

The group is currently composed of the following 47 Member States, more than half of which are developing countries:

Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Costa

Rica, Cote D'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA, Vietnam, and Yugoslavia.

Do only government representatives attend ICGFI meetings?

Meetings are attended by designated experts from ICGFI member governments, and representatives of other interested governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are invited by ICGFI to attend as observers.

Where is the Secretariat located?

Food & Environmental Protection Section, Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, International Atomic Energy Agency, Wagramerstrasse 5, P.O. Box 100, A-1400 Vienna, Austria. Phone: (43-1) 2600 extension 21638 or 21639; Facsimile: (43-1) 26007; e-mail: Official.Mail@iaea.org

How does ICGFI communicate with all the countries?

There is an ICGFI National Contact Point for each Member State.

What are the responsibilities of ICGFI Contact Points?

1. Distribution within the country of documents, working papers and other information material emanating from ICGFI or its Secretariat;

2. Co-ordinating the preparation for transmission to the Secretariat of technical comments/ information requested;

3. Taking follow-up action on particular matters, in collaboration with the expert(s) attending the particular ICGFI meeting;

4. Providing information, as available, to the Secretariat on the status of food irradiation technology, its regulatory control and other related topics of interest to ICGFI; and

5. Ensuring that information made available by the ICGFI Secretariat is disseminated to the interested national entities/individuals.

Public Meeting: The public meeting will take place at the US Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC, Room 5066 South Building. To accommodate all public forum participants, we request that individuals planning to attend should so inform the Department in advance by contacting: Foreign Agricultural Service, International Trade Policy, Food Safety and Technical Services Division, Room 5545, South Building, 1400

Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20250, (202) 720-1301; or e-mail ofsts@fas.usda.gov. Please indicate the organization represented, if any, including the names and titles of individuals attending.

Written Comments: Those persons wishing to submit written comments should provide five (5) typed copies to Foreign Agricultural Service, International Trade Policy, Food Safety and Technical Services Division, Room 5545, South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC. If the submission contains business confidential information, five copies of a confidential version must also be submitted. A justification as to why the information contained in the submission should be treated confidentially must be included in the submission. In addition, any submissions containing business confidential information must be clearly marked "Confidential" at the top and bottom of the cover page (or letter) and of each succeeding page of the submission. The version that does not contain confidential information should also be clearly marked, at the top and bottom of each page, "public version" or "nonconfidential". Written comments submitted in connection with this request, except for information deemed "business confidential" by FAS will be available for public inspection in the USDA Reading Room, Room 1141, USDA South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC. Normal Reading Room hours are from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Please call (202) 690-2817 to assure that assistance will be available in the Reading Room.

Dated: September 27, 1999.

Timothy J. Galvin,

Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service.

[FR Doc. 99-25484 Filed 9-28-99; 9:51 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-10-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Information Collection; Request for Comments; Forest Service Stewardship Programs Demographics

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Forest Service announces its intention to seek approval for a collection of demographic information on non-

industrial private forest owners, who participate in the following two Forest Service State and Private Forestry programs: the Forest Stewardship Program and the Stewardship Incentive Program. This demographic information will help ensure that these agency programs serve eligible landowners without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, or disability status.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing on or before November 30, 1999.

ADDRESSES: All comments should be addressed to: Stewardship Coordinator, Cooperative Forestry Staff, Mail Stop 1123, Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090.

Comments also may be submitted via facsimile to (202) 205-1271 or by email to: cf/wo@fs.fed.us.

The public may inspect comments received at the Office of the Director, Cooperative Forestry Staff, Forest Service, USDA, 201 14th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. Visitors are urged to call ahead to facilitate entrance into the building.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan Stein, Cooperative Forestry Staff, at (202) 205-0837.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Description of Information Collection

The following describes the new information collection:

Title: Stewardship Incentive Program Participant Demographics.

OMB Number: New.

Expiration Date of Approval: New.

Type of request: This is a new information collection that has not received approval from the Office of Management and Budget.

Abstract: The Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act (16 U.S.C., 21 03B) authorizes the Forest Service to provide technical and financial assistance to non-industrial private forest (NIPF) owners under the Forest Stewardship and Stewardship Incentive Programs.

The Forest Stewardship Program is the program that helps NIPF landowners prepare the forest stewardship plans for their land. Landowners need a completed forest stewardship plan to become eligible to receive cost-share dollars under the Stewardship Incentive Program.

The Stewardship Incentive Program is the program that assists NIPF owners with up to 75 percent of the funding on a cost-share basis to implement forest stewardship plan practices. Both programs are administered cooperatively with State forestry agencies.

Under this information collection, participants, enrolled in either of these

programs, will be asked by their State forestry or State natural resource agency to voluntarily complete a Stewardship Program Participant Demographics Form. Program participants will answer questions that include their race, their ethnicity, their gender, and whether or not they have a disability.

The data collected will help the Forest Service evaluate the effectiveness of its outreach efforts to involve representative segments of society in Forest Stewardship Program and Stewardship Incentive Program.

The data in this information collection are not available from other sources.

Estimate of burden: 5 minutes.

Type of respondents: Non-industrial private forest owners.

Estimated number of respondents: 18,500.

Estimated number of responses per respondent: 1.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 1,542 hours.

Comment is Invited

The agency invites comments on the following: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the stated purpose or the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical or scientific 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 the collection of information on the respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Use of Comments

All comments received in response to this notice, including name and address when provided, will become a matter of public record. Comments received in response to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval.

Dated: September 13, 1999.

Larry Payne,

Associate Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry.

[FR Doc. 99-25629 Filed 9-30-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-U