ADDRESSES: We invite you to submit comments on this notice. In your comments, include date, volume, and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**. You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to *http://regulations.gov.* Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- *Mail:* Rick Blackwood, Agricultural Program Specialist, USDA, FSA, Stop 0572, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250–0572.

You may also send comments to the Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503. Copies of the information collection may be requested by contacting Rick Blackwood at the above addresses.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rick Blackwood, Agricultural Program Specialist, (202) 720–5422, or by email: *rick.blackwood@wdc.usda.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Power of Attorney.

OMB Control Number: 0560–0190.

Expiration Date of Approval: December 31, 2013.

Type of Request: Extension with a revision.

Abstract: Individuals or entities that want to appoint another to act as an attorney-in-fact in connection with certain FSA, CCC, NRCS, FCIC, and RMA programs and related actions must complete a FSA–211, Power of Attorney form. The FSA–211 is the form that is used by a grantor to appoint another to act on the individual's or entity's behalf for certain FSA, CCC, NRCS, FCIC, and RMA programs and related actions, giving the appointee legal authority to enter into certain binding agreements on the grantor's behalf. The FSA–211 also provides FSA, CCC, NRCS, FCIC, and RMA a source to verify an individual's authority to sign and act for another in the event of errors or fraud.

The information collected on the FSA–211 is limited to grantor's name, signature and identification number, the grantee's address, and the applicable FSA, CCC, NRCS, FCIC, and RMA programs. The burden has increased by 58,681 hours due to the 1-hour travel times per respondent included and the actual numbers of respondents in this request.

Estimate of Average Time to respond: 1.25 hours (75 minutes) per response. The average travel time, which is included in the total annual burden, is estimated to be 1 hour per respondent.

Type of Respondents: Individuals or authorized representatives of entities, such as corporations, that want to appoint an attorney-in-fact to act on their behalf.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 51,585.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Number of Responses: 51,585.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 64,256 hours.

We are requesting comments on all aspects of this information collection to help us to:

(1) Evaluate whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of FSA, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(2) Evaluate the accuracy of FSA's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

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

(4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All responses to this notice, including name and addresses when provided, will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Signed on June 18, 2013.

Juan M. Garcia,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

[FR Doc. 2013–15336 Filed 6–26–13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–05–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. FSIS–2011–0033]

Availability of Guidance: Establishments Guidance for the Selection of a Commercial or Private Microbiological Testing Laboratory

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing the availability of final guidance for federally inspected establishments in the selection of commercial and private microbiological testing laboratories. FSIS has posted this policy guidance on its Web page *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/compliance-guides-index.* FSIS encourages establishments that prepare meat, poultry, or processed egg products to consider the criteria in the guidance in selecting commercial or private microbiological testing laboratories and in determining the laboratories' capability to produce accurate and reliable results. Regulated establishments are required to introduce into commerce only meat, poultry, or processed egg products that are safe and not adulterated or misbranded. Establishments that select laboratories that do not apply appropriate testing methods or maintain effective Quality Control or Quality Assurance (QC/QA) practices may not receive reliable or useful test results and thus run the risk of not being aware that the food that they have produced is unsafe.

DATES: The guidance is effective August 26, 2013.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Evelyne Mbandi, Deputy Director, Risk, Innovations, and Management Staff, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Patriots Plaza 3, Mailstop 3782, Room 163–B, Washington, DC 20250; Phone: (301) 504–0897; Email: *evelyne.mbandi@fsis.usda.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

In a **Federal Register** notice published March 8, 2012 (77 FR 13999), FSIS made available its ''Establishment Guidance for the Selection of a Commercial or Private Microbiological Testing Laboratory'' and requested comment on it. As FSIS explained in the 2012 **Federal Register** notice, this guidance document provides establishments that prepare meat, poultry, and processed egg products with criteria for selecting a commercial or private laboratory to analyze their samples. Regulated establishments are ultimately responsible for the testing methods and practices that the laboratory employs on the establishments' behalf.

An FSIS-regulated establishment may perform microbiological testing for various reasons, including, but not limited to: Fulfilling regulatory requirements; performing on-going verification of the establishment's Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan; supporting decisions made in the establishment's hazard analysis; evaluating the effectiveness of the establishment's sanitation program; and complying with purchase specifications or requirements.

In response to the comments it received, FSIS has revised the guidance to clarify that establishments that select laboratories that meet the guidance provided in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17025 accreditation schemes would meet the applicable criteria set out in FSIS's guidance. FSIS also revised the guidance to explain that establishments that have samples analyzed using an accredited laboratory and an FSIS Microbiology Laboratory Guidebook (MLG) method would meet the applicable criteria recommended in the guidance. FSIS also revised the guidance to state that proficiency testing (PT) should be performed on a regular basis. FSIS made other technical changes to the guidance discussed below in the response to comments.

FSIS encourages establishments to use the guidance in selecting commercial or private laboratories and for ensuring that microbiological testing performed on their behalf meets their food safety needs.

Discussion of Comments

FSIS received seven comments on the guidance in response to the 2012 **Federal Register** notice. These comments were from suppliers of laboratory services and products, providers of proficiency testing, commercial laboratories, trade associations, and meat packing and processing establishment representatives.

The following is a discussion of the relevant issues raised in the comments.

Comment: A commenter asked, if an establishment required a commercial laboratory to follow the guidance and provide a written guarantee to the establishment to this effect, would FSIS consider the establishment to be following the guidance? The commenter also asked whether FSIS would instruct IPP to write a noncompliance record (NR) if the laboratory did not follow the guidance. In addition, the commenter asked what scientific criteria a small establishment owner might provide a laboratory to help ensure that the laboratory used acceptable methods and provided reliable results.

Response: Following this guidance is not a requirement for establishments. If an establishment chooses to follow this guidance, FSIS recommends that it do more than provide a copy to the laboratories. FSIS recommends that the establishment ask the laboratory to do more than give the establishment a written guarantee that it is following the guidance. For example, in addition to completing the checklist (Appendix I), the laboratory should provide documentation for the establishment to be able to determine that the laboratory is using validated methods to test its samples, and that the methods are fit for the purpose. The establishment is responsible for performing on-going HACCP verification activities (9 CFR 417.4(a)) and documenting those activities and their frequency (9 CFR 417.5(a)(3)) to support its decisions in its hazard analysis. The establishment should ensure that the laboratory is providing reliable results by understanding their significance and how they apply to its food safety system, e.g., whether the results evidence that the product is adulterated.

Because following the guidance is not required, FSIS will not issue an NR if an establishment has chosen not to follow it or does not ensure that a laboratory that tests product samples on its behalf follows it. However, FSIS will continue to verify that establishments comply with the regulations.

Small establishments can provide a copy of this guidance to laboratories they employ to help ensure that these laboratories use acceptable methods and provide reliable results. In addition, small establishments can request a copy of the completed checklist (Appendix I) from the laboratory.

Comment: Commenters noted that similar guidance is available that addresses how establishments should select a testing laboratory and is used by FSIS, FDA, and many other federal laboratories: *Association of Analytical Communities (AOAC) International Guidelines for Laboratories Performing Microbiological and Chemical Analyses of Food and Pharmaceuticals.* The commenter recommended that all laboratories, regardless of size, or whether they are third-party or on-site, be required to meet the same criteria to provide consistency of test results.

Response: FSIS recognizes that the *AOAC International Guidelines for Laboratories Performing Microbiological and Chemical Analyses of Food and Pharmaceuticals* is useful for laboratory staff and as guidance for laboratories seeking to implement the ISO 17025 standards. FSIS has developed its guidance to assist industry plant managers and support staff in assessing and selecting laboratory services. While FSIS acknowledges that there is some technical overlap between these documents, the FSIS document provides language and content intended for a non-technical industry audience. Regarding the suggestion that all laboratories meet the same criteria regardless of size, FSIS is providing guidance, not proposing to mandate laboratory accreditation.

Comment: A commenter stated that the guidance should state that some accreditation schemes, e.g. ISO, meet the criteria in FSIS's guidelines.

Response: In the final guidance, FSIS has added an explanation that laboratories that meet the guidance provided in the ISO 17025 accreditation schemes would meet the criteria in the guidelines. Similarly, FSIS has explained that establishments that analyze samples using an accredited laboratory and an FSIS Microbiology Laboratory Guidebook (MLG) method would also meet the criteria in the guidance.

Comment: One commenter asked whether FSIS has developed a list of minimally acceptable test protocols.

Response: FSIS has not developed a list of minimally acceptable test protocols. However, FSIS has posted a web-based list of validated methods commonly used by regulated establishments to test for pathogens of interest (*E. coli O157:H7* and *STECs; Listeria monocytogenes* and *Listeria* species; and *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* species) in meat, poultry, and processed egg products. The list of these methods is available at: *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/New+Technologies.* FSIS will revise the Web-based database of commonly used methods on a quarterly basis. However, establishments or laboratories can use other methods. As stated in Chapter 2, Part D, Method of Selection and Implementation, in this guidance, the method should be capable of detecting the target pathogen and have been validated using a scientifically robust study by a recognized entity, as outlined in the FSIS validation guidance document for test kit manufacturers and laboratories, available at: *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/966638c7–1931-471f-a79e-4155ce461d65/Validation_Studies_Pathogen_Detection_Methods.pdf?MOD=AJPERES.* Internationally recognized independent organizations include AOAC, AFNOR, MicroVal, and NordVal. Any modifications introduced to a validated method should also be validated using a scientifically robust study. Samples could also be analyzed by a laboratory that is ISO 17025-accredited, using a method in the FSIS MLG. Although ISO accreditation is not required, accreditation provides increased confidence in the accuracy of the test results. Using either an acceptable validated method or any other sample testing method the establishment can support would be acceptable to the Agency. Additional information on the FSIS MLG Methods and ISO

accreditation is available at: *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/science/laboratories-and-procedures/guidebooks-and-methods/microbiology-laboratory-guidebook/microbiology-laboratory-guidebook ; http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/production-and-inspection/key-facts-iso-accreditation/key-facts-iso-accreditation;* and *http://www.isoiec17025.com/.*

Comment: A commenter stated that the guidance did not state whether proficiency testing (PT) should be required of the laboratory or of the individual analyst or technician and requested clarification regarding necessary PT qualifications for individual analysts of technicians. The commenter also suggested that instructions in the guidance should change the definition of ''routine PT'' to reflect the reality that PT is regularly administered more than once or twice a year.

Response: FSIS has revised the document to state that PT should be performed on a regular basis (at least 2 to 3 times annually). FSIS explains that PT programs are designed to critically evaluate the accuracy, precision, and efficiency of the laboratory. PT provides evidence of a laboratory's ability to produce credible analytical results with a method, and laboratories may use PT as a means to evaluate individual analysts' initial and ongoing competency to perform a method.

Comment: A commenter stated that the guidance should provide clarification on some of the instructions on how PT should be utilized operationally by a laboratory. Specifically, the commenter stated that FSIS should clarify that worksheets for PT are not provided by the PT program. The commenter also noted that PT organizations do not ''certify'' laboratories. The commenter suggested that portions of this guidance may benefit from a better explanation of FSIS's compliance process and recommended that the establishment make the completed checklist (Appendix I) available to FSIS personnel as supplemental data. Finally, the commenter stated that, when choosing a laboratory, the establishment should consider whether the result of the laboratory's previous year's PT was acceptable.

Response: FSIS has revised the guidance to incorporate the commenter's suggestion by referring to PT records rather than worksheets and made the other necessary technical changes recommended by the commenter. In addition, FSIS has revised the Quality Assurance Management System section of the guidance document and added questions regarding the verification of laboratory's past year's PT results.

Comment: One commenter stated that the guidance document would almost preclude the use of microbiological testing data generated by private and commercial laboratories because, the commenter thought, the document requires criteria similar to ISO 17025. The commenter added that the guidance document had the same guidance for selection of a laboratory that completes very basic tests as that for a lab that completes complex pathogenic tests. The commenter also noted that the guidance on collection of samples should reflect that food samples in finished packages need not be transferred to a ''sterile primary container'' as long as the receiving laboratory verifies that the package is intact. Finally, the commenter requested clarification or examples of how methods could be validated in foods representative of those likely to be sampled at the establishment.

Response: This document is only guidance, and it does not set new requirements for laboratories or the regulated industry. The final document explains that pathogen testing laboratories should follow requirements for Biosafety Level II laboratory operation as outlined in *Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories.* The guidance continues to recognize the critical data provided by on-site laboratories. FSIS also explains that food samples in intact retail packs do not have to be placed in sterile containers but should be placed in a secondary container, such as a sealed plastic bag. This approach is consistent with the Agency's sample collection methods.

The guidance document provides information on lab validation. Representative food matrices are available at the AOAC–RI Performance Tested Web page. The Agency is providing links to the AOAC–RI Performance Tested Methods and AOAC Official Methods of Analysis in the Reference section of the guidance document. Manufacturers of microbiological testing products, including pathogen screening tests, often provide useful information on the validation of their products.

Comment: A commenter stated that wording in the FSIS guidance document was vague with regard to the risk of contamination that could spread from an on-site laboratory to manufacturing areas of an establishment.

Response: FSIS has revised the guidance to recommend that, because of safety concerns and to prevent cross-contamination, a pathogen testing laboratory should be segregated from manufacturing areas, and that access to the laboratory space be limited.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center at (202) 720–2600 (voice and TTY).

To file a written complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250–9410 or call (202) 720–5964 (voice and TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Additional Public Notification

FSIS will announce this notice online through the FSIS Web page located at *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations/federal-register/federal-register-notices.*

FSIS will also make copies of this **Federal Register** publication available through the FSIS Constituent Update, which is used to provide information regarding FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, **Federal Register** notices, FSIS public meetings, and other types of information that could affect or would be of interest to constituents and stakeholders. The Update is communicated via Listserv, a free electronic mail subscription service for industry, trade groups, consumer interest groups, health professionals, and other individuals who have asked to be included. The Update is also available on the FSIS Web page. In addition, FSIS offers an electronic mail subscription service which provides automatic and customized access to selected food safety news and information. This service is available at *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/programs-and-services/email-subscription-service.* Options range from recalls to export information to regulations, directives, and notices. Customers can add or delete subscriptions themselves, and have the option to password protect their accounts.

Done at Washington, DC, on June 21, 2013.

Alfred V. Almanza,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2013–15422 Filed 6–26–13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–DM–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCIES: Rural Housing Service (RHS), USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; comments requested.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the intention of the above-named Agencies to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of debt settlement of Community Facilities and Direct Business Program Loans and Grants.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by August 26, 2013 to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For inquiries on the Information Collection Package, contact Derek Jones, Community Programs Specialist, Community Programs, RHS, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Mail Stop 0787, Washington, DC 20250–0787, Telephone (202) 720–1504, Email *derek.jones@wdc.usda.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: *Title:* 7 CFR part 1956, subpart C—''Debt Settlement-Community and Business Programs.''

OMB Number: 0575–0124.

Expiration Date of Approval: September 30, 2013

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The following Community and Direct Business Programs loans and grants are debt settled by this currently approved docket (0575–0124). The Community Facilities loan and grant program is authorized by Section 306 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926) to make loans to public entities, nonprofit corporations, and Indian tribes through the Community Facilities program for the development of essential community facilities primarily serving rural residents.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Title 3 (Pub. L. 88–452), authorizes Economic Opportunity Cooperative loans to assist incorporated and unincorporated associations to provide low-income rural families essential processing, purchasing, or marketing services, supplies, or facilities.

The Food Security Act of 1985, Section 1323 (Pub. L. 99–198), authorizes loan guarantees and grants to Nonprofit National Corporations to provide technical and financial assistance to for-profit or nonprofit local businesses in rural areas.

The Business and Industry program is authorized by Section 310 B (7 U.S.C. 1932) (Pub. L. 92.419, August 30, 1972) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to improve, develop, or finance business, industry, and employment and improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities, including pollution abatement control.

The Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, Section 310 B(c) (7 U.S.C. 1932(c)), authorizes Rural Business Enterprise Grants to public bodies and nonprofit corporations to facilitate the development of private businesses in rural areas.

The Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, Section 310 B(f)(i) (7 U.S.C. 1932(c)), authorized Rural Cooperative Development Grants to nonprofit institutions for the purpose of enabling such institutions to establish and operate centers for rural cooperative development.

The purpose of the debt settlement function for the above programs is to provide the delinquent client with an equitable tool for the compromise, adjustment, cancellation, or charge-off of a debt owned to the Agency.

The information collected is similar to that required by a commercial lender in similar circumstances.

Information will be collected by the field offices from applicants, borrowers, consultants, lenders, and attorneys.

Failure to collect information could result in improper servicing of these loans.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 7.3 hours per response.

Respondents: Public bodies and nonprofit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 29.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 4.6.

Estimated Number of Responses: 134.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 990 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Jeanne Jacobs, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, (202) 692–0040.

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 the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Jeanne Jacobs, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, STOP 0742, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20250. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: June 17, 2013.

Tammye Treviño,

Administrator, Rural Housing Service.

[FR Doc. 2013–15337 Filed 6–26–13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–XV–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Title: National Estuaries Restoration Inventory.

OMB Control Number: 0648–0479.

Form Number(s): NA.

Type of Request: Regular submission (revision and extension of a current information collection).

Number of Respondents: 31.

Average Hours per Response: New entries into project database, 4 hours; updates, 2 hours.

Burden Hours: 103.

Needs and Uses: This request is for revision and extension of a currently approved information collection.

Collection of estuary habitat restoration project information (e.g.,