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**BY ELECTRONIC MAIL**

**Re: [Docket No. FSIS-2012-0050]**

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Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved  
Information Collection; Importation and Transportation of Meat and  
Poultry Products <http://www.regulations.gov>

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing its intention to request an extension of an approved information collection regarding the importation and transportation of meat and poultry products. This information collection is due to expire.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

Title: Importation and Exportation of Meat and Poultry Products.  
OMB Control No.: 0583-0094.  
Expiration Date: 3/31/13.  
Type of Request: Extension of an approved information collection.

**Background:** FSIS has been delegated the authority to exercise the functions of the Secretary of Agriculture (7 CFR 2.18, 2.53) as specified in the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) (21 U.S.C. 601, et seq.) and the Poultry Products and Inspection Act (PPIA) (21 U.S.C. 451, et seq.). FSIS protects the public by verifying that meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome, not adulterated, and correctly labeled.

FSIS is planning to request an extension of this approved information collection because it is due to expire on March 31, 2013.

Unless accounted for in an establishment's HACCP plan, meat and poultry products not marked with the mark of inspection and shipped from one official establishment to another for further processing must be transported under USDA seal to prevent such unmarked product from entering into commerce (9 CFR 325.5). To track product shipped under seal, FSIS requires shipping establishments to complete FSIS Form 7350-1 that identifies the type, amount, and weight of the product.

Foreign countries exporting meat and poultry products to the United States must establish eligibility for importation of product into the U.S., and annually certify that their inspection systems are "equivalent to" the U.S. inspection system (9 CFR 327.2 and 381.196).

**[Docket No. FSIS-2012-0050]**

Additionally, meat and poultry products intended for import into the U.S. must be accompanied by a certificate, signed by an official of the foreign government, stating that the products have been produced by certified foreign establishments (9 CFR 327.2 and 381.197).

Maintenance of eligibility of a country for importation of products into the U.S. depends on the results of periodic reviews of each establishment listed in the certification (9 CFR 327.2 and 381.196). A written report must be prepared by the representative of the foreign government documenting the findings with respect to the effective operation of the system.

Meat and poultry products exported to the U.S. must be accompanied by a certificate signed by a responsible official of the exporting country (9 CFR 327.4 and 381.197).

Import establishments that wish to pre-stamp imported product with the inspection legend prior to FSIS inspection must submit a letter to FSIS requesting approval to do so (9 CFR 327.10(d) and 381.204).

#### **Comment**

It is the agency's viewpoint to question whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of FSIS's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility.

**Response:** *The collection of information will provide the agency with a basis for the validity of processes that are to be implemented. Without the information, how can any assumption of new procedures be fully utilized?*

**Response:** *The completion of FSIS Form 7350-1 is necessary and practical to keep potentially adulterated products out of U.S. commerce.*

**Response:** *In the case of imported products and all documentation required for exportation to the U.S., all information collected will help ensure that foreign products do not enter U.S. commerce without proper country certification and that equivalent standards are maintained to ensure the safety of public health.*

#### **Comment**

The agency has also asked for the assessment of the accuracy of FSIS's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used.

**Response:** *Any assessment must take into consideration the purpose and need for the information collected and not be factored with how much a burden it will impose upon those that provide such information. The purpose or mission is food safety and the assurance that both domestic and foreign products are safe and labeled properly.*

**Response:** *FSIS must continually validate the process and methodology used to collect the information that will continue to make America's food supply one of the world's safest. Methods and assumptions can become outdated as new technological advances in food processing occur.*

#### **Comment**

There is a need to explore the various ways, as appropriate, to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected.

**[Docket No. FSIS-2012-0050]**

**Response:** *The most efficient way to enhance quality and clarity of the collected information is to ensure that all involved in the process are in agreement with the information content and the message it intends to convey.*

**Response:** *The tracking of domestic products between establishments, oversight of all certification and equivalent standards of foreign countries and establishments, and the written reports and letters required in the importation process must be accomplished by the newest and most advanced methods now available in communications technology. FSIS must explore by all means available communications that are clear, concise, and of such a quality that the message is readily understood by all those involved in the chain of delivery.*

### **Comment**

There is a need to determine ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques, or other forms of information technology.

**Response:** *To minimize the information collection, the Agency must use any and all electronic means available as it relates to cost analysis. In this era of cost-cutting, the agency has the burden to utilize all methodologies available for minimization purposes.*

**Response:** *The collection of international information that is required to continually protect public health can only be minimized if the information techniques will continue to provide a level of accuracy and conciseness needed for decision making by FSIS.*

**Response:** *Pre-Stamping letters are created locally within import establishments. There should be no reason why this information cannot be collected by electronic or other in-plant automated means.*

### **Comment**

FSIS has made the following estimates on the basis of an information collection assessment.

Estimate of Burden: FSIS estimates that it takes each respondent an average of 20.9 hours per year to complete the forms and documents described above.

Respondents: Importers, establishments, foreign governments.

Estimated No. of Respondents: 136.

Estimated No. of Annual Responses per Respondent: 650.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 2,846 hours.

**Response:** *The respondents commented on one version of the form. If a change is made then will the respondents have the ability to again comment?*

**Response:** *As foreign governments change their internal procedures for certification and the format for written reports, will the governments be required to update their answers to the data collection surveys by FSIS?*

**Response:** *Due to the continual changes in the international area of food production and distribution, how will the collection of information from foreign entities be measured against new information technology gathering techniques such as the newly functioning PHIS?*