

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****National Agricultural Statistics Service****Notice of Intent to Seek Approval to Conduct an Information Collection**

**AGENCY:** National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. No. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), this notice announces the National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS) intention to request approval for a new information collection, the Fruit and Nut Wildlife Damage Survey.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by April 29, 1998 to be assured of consideration.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS:** Contact Rich Allen, Associate Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 4117 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-2000, (202) 720-4333.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Title:** Fruit and Nut Wildlife Damage Survey.

**Type of Request:** Intent to seek approval to conduct an information collection.

**Abstract:** A sample of U.S. producers of selected fruits and nuts will be surveyed. The primary goal of the survey is the collection and development of valid statistical data reflecting the percentage of U.S. fruit and nut growers experiencing loss of product or resources caused by vertebrate wildlife. An accurate measurement of dollar losses due to vertebrate wildlife will also be obtained.

These data will be collected under the authority of 7 U.S.C. 2204(a). Individually identifiable data collected under this authority are governed by section 1770 of the Food Security Act of 1985, 7 U.S.C. 2276, which requires USDA to afford strict confidentiality to non-aggregated data provided by respondents.

**Estimate of Burden:** Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per response.

**Respondents:** Fruit and Nut Growers.

**Estimated number of Respondents:** 15,000.

**Estimated total Annual Burden on Respondents:** 2,500 hours.

Copies of this information collection and related instructions can be obtained without charge from Larry Gambrell, the Agency OMB Clearance Officer, at (202) 720-5778.

**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:

Larry Gambrell, Agency OMB Clearance Officer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 4162 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-2000.

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.

Signed at Washington, DC, January 22, 1998.

**Rich Allen,**

*Acting Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-4426 Filed 2-20-98; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-20-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Natural Resources Conservation Service****Hackberry Draw Watershed, Eddy County, NM; Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact**

**AGENCY:** Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environment Policy Act of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR Part 1500); and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Rules (7 CFR Part 650); the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is not being prepared for the repair of Floodwater Retarding Structure 1 and Floodwater Diversion 2 in the Hackberry Draw Watershed.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kenneth B. Leiting, Acting State

Conservationist, National Resources Conservation Service, 6200 Jefferson, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109-3734; telephone 505-761-4400.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The environmental assessment of this federally assisted action indicates that the project will not cause significant local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. As a result of these findings, Kenneth B. Leiting, Acting State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement are not needed for this project.

The project purpose is flood prevention. The action includes the repair of one floodwater retarding dam and one floodwater diversion.

The Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) has been forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency and various Federal, State, and local agencies and interested parties. A limited number of copies of the FNSI are available to fill single copy requests at the above address. Basic data developed during the environmental assessment is on file and may be reviewed by contacting Kenneth B. Leiting.

No administrative action on implementation of the proposal will be taken until 30 days after the date of this publication in the **Federal Register**.

(This activity is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.904, Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention and is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials)

**Kenneth B. Leiting,**

*Acting State Conservationist.*

[FR Doc. 98-4395 Filed 2-20-98; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-16-M**

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Rural Business-Cooperative Service****National Sheep Industry Improvement Center; Solicitation of Nominations of Board Members**

**AGENCY:** Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice: invitation to submit nominations.

**SUMMARY:** The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) announces that it is accepting nominations for the Board of Directors of the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center for two directors' positions whose terms are expiring on February 13, 1999. The two positions are for active producers of

sheep or goats, at least one of whom should be involved in goat production. Board members manage and oversee the Center's activities. Nominations may only be submitted by National organizations that consist primarily of active sheep or goat producers in the United States and who have as their primary interest the production of sheep or goats in the United States. Nominating organizations should submit:

(1) Substantiation that the nominating organization is national in scope,

(2) The number and percent of members that are active sheep or goat producers,

(3) Substantiation of the primary interests of the organization, and

(4) An Advisory Committee Membership Background Information form (Form AD-755) for each nominee.

This action is taken to carry out section 759 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 for the establishment of a National Sheep Industry Improvement Center.

**DATES:** The closing date for acceptance of nominations is June 23, 1998.

Nominations must be received by, or postmarked, on or before, this date.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit nominations and statements on qualifications to Cooperative Services, RBS, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Stop 3252, Room 4204, Washington, DC 20250-3252, Attn.: National Sheep Improvement Center, Nominations.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Thomas H. Stafford, Director, Cooperative Marketing Division, Cooperative Services, RBS, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Stop 3252, Washington, DC 20250-3252, telephone (202) 690-0368 (this is not a toll free number), FAX 202-690-2723, or e-mail thomas.stafford@usda.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, known as the 1996 Farm Bill, established a National Sheep Industry Improvement Center. The Center shall: (1) Promote strategic development activities and collaborative efforts by private and State entities to maximize the impact of Federal assistance to strengthen and enhance production and marketing of sheep or goat products in the United States; (2) optimize the use of available human capital and resources within the sheep or goat industries; (3) provide assistance to meet the needs of the sheep or goat industry for infrastructure development, business development, production, resource development, and market and environmental research; (4) advance activities that empower and build the

capacity of the United States sheep or goat industry to design unique responses to special needs of the sheep or goat industries on both a regional and national basis; and (5) adopt flexible and innovative approaches to solving the long-term needs of the United States sheep or goat industry. The Center has a Revolving Fund established in the Treasury to carry out the purposes of the Center. Management of the Center is vested in a Board of Directors, which has hired an Executive Director and other staff to operate the Center.

The Board of Directors is composed of seven voting members of whom four are active producers of sheep or goats in the United States, two have expertise in finance and management, and one has expertise in lamb, wool, goat or goat product marketing. The two open positions are the producer seats, with at least one designated as representing goat producers. The Board also includes two non-voting members, the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development and the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Research, Education, and Economics. Board members will not receive compensation for serving on the Board of Directors, but shall be reimbursed for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses.

The Secretary of Agriculture shall appoint the voting members from the submitted nominations. Member's term of office shall be three years. Voting members are limited to two terms. The two positions for which nominees are sought are currently held by members serving their first term, thus are eligible to be re-nominated. The Board shall meet not less than once each fiscal year, but are likely to meet at least quarterly.

The statement of qualifications of the individual nominees is being obtained by using Form AD-755, "Advisory Committee Membership Background Information." The requirements of this form are incorporated under OMB number 0505-0001.

Dated: February 13, 1998.

**Dayton J. Watkins,**

*Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-4428 Filed 2-20-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XY-U

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Utilities Service

#### Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water; Existing System North/Lyon County Phase and Northeast Phase Expansion Project

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of draft environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is issuing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water Existing System North/Lyon County Phase and Northeast Phase Expansion Project. The Draft EIS was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (U.S.C. 4231 *et seq.*) in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508) and Agency regulations (7 CFR 1940-G). RUS invites comments on the Draft EIS.

The purpose of the EIS is to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of a project proposal located in southwestern Minnesota. The proposal to which the Agency is responding to involves providing financial assistance for the development and expansion of a public rural water system and a review of the environmental impacts from previous expansion phase activities. The applicant for this proposal is a public body named Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water (LPRW). LPRW's main offices are located in Lake Benton, MN. Specific project activities are and have included the development of groundwater sources and production well fields and the construction of water treatment facilities and water distribution networks. The counties in Minnesota affected by this proposal include Yellow Medicine, Lincoln, and Lyon Counties and Deuel County in South Dakota.

**DATES:** Written comments on the Draft EIS will be accepted on or before April 24, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** To send comments or for more information, contact: Mark S. Plank, USDA, Rural Utilities Service, Engineering and Environmental Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, Stop 1571, Washington, DC 20250, telephone (202) 720-1649, fax (202) 720-0820, or e-mail: mplank@rus.usda.gov.

A copy of the Draft EIS or an Executive Summary can be obtained over the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/enviro.html>. The files are in a portable document format (pdf); in order to review or print the document, users need to obtain a free copy of Acrobat Reader. The Acrobat Reader can be obtained from <http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>.

Copies of the Draft EIS will be available for public review during