

supply, demand, current receipts, exports, imports, and prices of agricultural products handled or marketed by cooperative associations, and to employ qualified commodity marketing specialists to summarize and analyze this information and disseminate the same among cooperative associations and others.”

RBS also has a stated objective to “assist U.S. farmer cooperatives to expand their participation in international trade of agricultural products and supplies and to review their progress.”

As trade agreements are implemented and domestic farm supports are reduced, a global presence is increasingly important to producers, their communities, and to job-creation and retention in agri- and food-related industries. Measurement and monitoring of cooperatives' global presence are stated objectives of RBS's International Trade Program. In order to carry out the agency's mission and objectives, RBS needs to collect information from the cooperative community. This information collection is designed to provide time-series data that will provide a better understanding of the opportunities and limitations of producer-owned cooperatives in global markets. The data provide the basis for research on trade-related issues affecting cooperatives, and background for trade-related policy analysis.

Beginning in 1980, RBS's predecessor agency Agricultural Cooperative Service (ACS) collected cooperative trade data at five year intervals. Value of cooperative exports by commodity and destination were measured, as well as information related to method of sale.

Values of imports by cooperatives, by commodity and country of origin were collected in 1986 and 1991. However, data collected at five-year intervals did not provide for meaningful analysis.

Further, previous collections were strictly limited to exports and imports, neglecting other important international arrangements such as strategic alliances and foreign direct investment. As a result, a more comprehensive, annual information collection has been developed to accomplish RBS objectives and paint a more accurate picture of cooperative involvement in international markets. These data are generally not available to RBS unless provided by the cooperatives.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average one (1) hour per response.

Respondents: Cooperatives involved in international activities.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 170.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: one per year.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 170 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Jean Mosley, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, at (202) 690-1587.

Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the function 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 use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Jean Mosley, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Stop 0743, 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 a public record.

Dated: February 18, 1998.

Dayton J. Watkins,

Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

[FR Doc. 98-4854 Filed 2-25-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XV-P

COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Agenda and Notice of Public Meeting of the North Dakota Advisory Committee

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, that a meeting of the North Dakota Advisory Committee to the Commission will convene at 2:00 p.m. and adjourn at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 19, 1998, at the Radisson Inn-Bismarck, 800 South Third Street, Bismarck, North Dakota 58504. The

purpose of the meeting is to update members on civil rights enforcement issues including presentations from the North Dakota Fair Housing Council and the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission.

Persons desiring additional information, or planning a presentation to the Committee, should contact John Dulles, Director of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, 303-866-1400 (TDD 303-866-1049). Hearing-impaired persons who will attend the meeting and require the services of a sign language interpreter should contact the Regional Office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

The meeting will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the Commission.

Dated at Washington, DC, February 19, 1998.

Carol-Lee Hurley,

Chief, Regional Programs Coordination Unit.

[FR Doc. 98-4921 Filed 2-25-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6335-01-P

CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

AGENCY: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

DATE AND TIME: Friday, March 6, 1998, 9:30 a.m.

PLACE: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 624 Ninth Street, N.W., Room 540, Washington, DC 20425.

STATUS:

Agenda

- I. Approval of Agenda
 - II. Approval of Minutes of February 6, 1998 Meeting
 - III. Announcements
 - IV. Staff Director's Report
 - V. State Advisory Committee Appointments for Maine, North Carolina, and Texas
 - VI. Los Angeles Hearing Report
 - VII. Future Agenda Items
- 11:00 a.m.—Staff Briefing on Americans with Disabilities Project

CONTACT PERSON FOR FURTHER

INFORMATION: Barbara Brooks, Press and Communications, (202) 376-8312.

Stephanie Y. Moore,

General Counsel.

[FR Doc. 98-5126 Filed 2-24-98; 2:41 p.m.]

BILLING CODE 6335-01-M