

reducing the need for travel and the costs associated with it, reducing caseload backlog, and increasing scheduling flexibility for agencies and attorneys as well as increasing access for parties.⁵ Critics, however, have suggested that hearings and other adjudicatory proceedings conducted by video may hamper communication between a party and the decision-maker; may hamper communication between parties and their attorneys or representatives; and/or may hamper a decision-maker's ability to make credibility determinations.⁶

Recognizing both the praise for and critique of the use of VTC in administrative hearings and other adjudicatory proceedings, the Administrative Conference issues this Recommendation regarding the use of VTC in Federal agencies with high volume caseloads. The Conference has a long standing commitment to the values inherent in the agency adjudicatory process: Efficiency, fairness and acceptability/satisfaction.⁷ These values should drive decisions to use VTC. Therefore, this Recommendation suggests that agencies should use VTC only after conducting an analysis of the costs and benefits of VTC use and determining that such use would improve efficiency (i.e., timeliness and costs of adjudications) and would not impair the fairness of the proceedings or the participants' satisfaction with them. In addition, this Recommendation supports the Conference's statutory mandate of making improvements to the regulatory and adjudicatory process by improving the effectiveness and fairness of applicable laws. See generally Administrative Conference Act, 5 U.S.C §§ 591–596.

Accordingly, this Recommendation is directed at those agencies with high volume caseloads that do not currently use VTC as a regular practice in administrative hearings and/or other adjudicatory proceedings and that may benefit from the use of it to improve efficiency and/or reduce costs. Agencies with high volume caseloads are likely to receive the most benefit and/or cost savings from the use of VTC. However, the Conference encourages all agencies (including those with lower volume caseloads) to consider whether the use of VTC would be beneficial as a way to improve efficiency and/or reduce costs while also preserving the fairness and participant satisfaction of proceedings. This Recommendation sets forth some non-exclusive criteria that agencies should consider. For those agencies that determine

that the use of VTC would be beneficial, this Recommendation also sets forth best practices provided in part by agencies currently using VTC.

Recommendation

1. Federal agencies with high volume caseloads should consider using video conferencing technology (“VTC”) to conduct administrative hearings and other aspects of adjudicatory proceedings. Agencies with lower volume caseloads may also benefit from this recommendation.

2. Federal agencies with high volume caseloads should consider the following non-exclusive criteria when determining whether to use video conferencing technology in administrative hearings and other adjudicatory proceedings:

(a) Whether an agency's use of VTC is legally permissible under its organic legislation and other laws;

(b) Whether the nature and type of administrative hearings and other adjudicatory proceedings conducted by the agency are conducive to the use of VTC;

(c) Whether VTC can be used without affecting the outcome of cases heard by the agency;

(d) Whether the agency's budget would allow for investment in appropriate and secure technology given the costs of VTC;

(e) Whether the use of VTC would create cost savings, such as savings associated with reductions in personnel travel and with increased productivity resulting from reductions in personnel time spent on travel;

(f) Whether the use of VTC would result in a reduction of the amount of wait time for an administrative hearing;

(g) Whether users of VTC, such as administrative law judges, hearing officers and other court staff, parties, witnesses and attorneys (or other party representatives), would find the use of such technology beneficial;

(h) Whether the agency's facilities and administration, both national and regional (if applicable), can be equipped to handle the technology and administration required for use of VTC;

(i) Whether the use of VTC would adversely affect the representation of a party at an administrative hearing or other adjudicatory proceeding; and

(j) Whether the communication between the various individuals present at a hearing or proceeding (including parties, witnesses, judges, hearing officers and other agency staff, translators and attorneys (or other party representatives)) would be adversely affected.

3. Federal agencies with high volume caseloads that decide to use video conferencing technology to conduct administrative hearings and other adjudicatory proceedings should consider the following best practices:

(a) Use VTC on a voluntary basis and allow a party to have an in-person hearing or proceeding if the party chooses to do so.

(b) Periodically evaluate the use of VTC to make sure that the use is outcome-neutral (i.e., does not affect the decision rendered) and that the use is meeting the needs of its users.

(c) Solicit feedback and comments (possibly through notice-and-comment

rulemaking) about VTC from those who would use it regularly (e.g., administrative law judges, hearing officers and other administrative staff, parties, witnesses and attorneys (or other party representatives)).

(d) Begin the use of VTC with a pilot program and then evaluate the pilot program before moving to wider use.

(e) Structure training at the outset of implementation of VTC use and have technical support available for troubleshooting and implementation questions.

(f) Consult the staff of the Administrative Conference of the United States and/or officials at other agencies that have used VTC for best practices, guidance, advice, and the possibilities for shared resources and collaboration.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. No. AMS–LS–11–0065]

Plan for Estimating Daily Livestock Slaughter Under Federal Inspection; Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), this document announces the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) intention to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget, for an extension of the currently approved information collection used to compile and generate the Federally Inspected Estimated Daily Slaughter Report.

DATES: Comments must be received by October 11, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be submitted electronically at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Comments may also be submitted to Jennifer Porter, Deputy Director, Livestock and Grain Market News Division, Livestock and Seed Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Stop 0252; 1400 Independence Avenue SW.; Room 2619–S; Washington, DC 20250–0252. All comments should reference document number AMS–LS–11–0065 and note the date and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**.

Submitted comments will be available for public inspection at <http://www.regulations.gov> or at the above address during regular business hours. Comments submitted in response to this

⁵ See Meghan Dunn & Rebecca Norwick, Federal Judicial Center Report of a Survey of Videoconferencing in the Court of Appeals (2006), pp. 1–2, available at [http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/vidconca.pdf/\\$file/vidconca.pdf](http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/vidconca.pdf/$file/vidconca.pdf).

⁶ See American Bar Association's Commission on Immigration Report entitled “Reforming the Immigration System” (2010), pp. 2–26–2–27.

⁷ See Roger C. Cramton, A Comment on Trial-Type Hearings in Nuclear Power Plant Siting, 58 Va. L. Rev. 585, 591–93 (1972) (Professor Cramton is a former Chairman of the Conference); see also Paul R. Verkuil, A Study of Informal Adjudication Procedures, 43 U. Chi. L. Rev. 739 (1976) (describing the values of efficiency, fairness and satisfaction) (Mr. Verkuil is the current Chairman of the Conference). The balancing of these procedural values was undertaken in *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976).

document will be included in the records and will be made available to the public. Please be advised that the identity of the individuals or entities submitting the comments will be made public on the Internet at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jennifer Porter, Deputy Director, Livestock and Grain Market News Division, AMS, USDA, by telephone at (202) 720-6231, or via e-mail at Jennifer.Porter@ams.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Plan for Estimating Daily Livestock Slaughter Under Federal Inspection.

OMB Number: 0581-0050.

Expiration Date of Approval: 01-31-2012.

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

Abstract: The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627), section 203(g) directs and authorizes the collection and dissemination of marketing information including adequate outlook information, on a market area basis, for the purpose of anticipating and meeting consumer requirements, aiding in the maintenance of farm income, and to bring about a balance between production and utilization.

Under this market news program, USDA issues a market news report estimating daily livestock slaughter under Federal inspection. This report is compiled by AMS on a voluntary basis in cooperation with the livestock and meat industry. Market news reporting must be timely, accurate, and continuous if it is to be useful to producers, processors, and the trade in general. The daily livestock slaughter estimates are provided at the request of industry and are used to make production and marketing decisions.

The Daily Estimated Livestock Slaughter Under Federal Inspection Report is used by a wide range of industry contacts, including packers, processors, producers, brokers and retailers of meat and meat products. The livestock and meat industry requested that USDA issue slaughter estimates (daily and weekly), by species, for cattle, calves, hogs and sheep in order to assist them in making immediate production and marketing decisions and as a guide to the volume of meat in the marketing channel. The information requested from respondents includes their estimation of the current day's slaughter at their plant(s) and the actual slaughter for the previous day. Also, the Government is a large purchaser of meat

and related products and this report assists other Government agencies in providing timely information on the quantity of meat entering the processing channels.

The information must be collected, compiled, and disseminated by an impartial third-party, in a manner which protects the confidentiality of the reporting entity. AMS is in the best position to provide this service.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .0333 hours per response.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit entities, individuals or households, farms, and the Federal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 72.

Estimated Number of Responses: 18,720.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 260.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 624 hours.

Comments are invited on: (1) 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; (2) 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; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All responses to this document will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated: August 3, 2011.

David R. Shipman,

Acting Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 2011-20113 Filed 8-8-11; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Research Service

Notice of the Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21st Century Agriculture Meeting

AGENCY: Office of the Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics, Agricultural Research Service.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., the United States Department of Agriculture announces a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21st Century Agriculture (AC21).

DATES: August 30-31, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Rooms 104A and 107A, USDA Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, 12th Street and Jefferson Drive, SW., Washington, DC 20250.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael Schechtman, Designated Federal Official, Office of the Deputy Secretary, USDA, 202B Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, 12th and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250; Telephone (202) 720-3817; Fax (202) 690-4265; E-mail AC21@ars.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The first meeting of the reconstituted AC21 has been scheduled for August 30-31, 2011. The AC21 consists of members representing the biotechnology industry, the organic food industry, farming communities, the seed industry, food manufacturers, state government, consumer and community development groups, as well as academic researchers and a medical doctor. In addition, representatives from the Departments of Commerce, Health and Human Services, and State, and the Environmental Protection Agency, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the Office of the United States Trade Representative have been invited to serve as "ex officio" members. The Committee meeting will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on each day. The topics to be discussed will include: (1) Rules of procedure for the AC21; (2) assessment of informational needs of AC21 members; (3) organization of the AC21's work in developing practical recommendations on approaches for bolstering coexistence among different agricultural production methods; and (4) preliminary presentations and introductory discussions on above work topic.

Background information regarding the work and membership of the AC21 will