

Overview of the Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act (Act) requires Federal agencies to submit information collection packages to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for approval every three years. Forms that are not renewed in that time frame become void. The term “information collection” refers to the forms used by Federal agencies to collect information from the public. In the case of marketing order committees and boards, the forms include background information forms, handler reports, ballots, and various other forms that individuals submit to their locally administering committee or board to stay in compliance with their respective marketing order.

The Act aims to minimize the burden of Federal paperwork on individuals, small business, State and local government, and other persons. The term “burden” refers to the time, effort, or financial resources expended to provide information to a Federal agency. To remain in compliance, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) must obtain approval from the OMB *before* a committee or board uses a form directed to 10 or more persons, or *before* continuing a collection that needs to be re-approved. The Act requires the following:

1. OMB must approve information collection;
2. Collection must be of vital importance to agency functioning;
3. An OMB control number, burden statement, non-discrimination statement and form expiration date must be displayed on forms; and
4. OMB information collection approval cannot exceed three years.

AMS staff ensures that all information collection activities and recommendations requiring additional information are in accordance with the Act. AMS directs the re-submission process and submits these requests to the OMB at least four months in advance of the expiration date.

OMB control numbers can be found in the top right corner of the form, and the date of approval is listed in the bottom left corner. Individuals should take notice of this information when completing forms, because only forms that meet the above listed criteria can be submitted to marketing order committees and boards for review.