



National  
Industrial  
Hemp Council  
of America

1575 "Eye" Street, NW Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005

March 30, 2026

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
Domestic Hemp Production Program

Re: Docket No. AMS-SC-25-0980  
Domestic Hemp Production Program; Request for Revision and Extension of Information Collection  
(OMB Control No. 0581-0318)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Industrial Hemp Council of America (NIHC) submits these comments in response to USDA's request for revision and extension of information collection requirements under the Domestic Hemp Production Program.

NIHC is a USDA cooperator actively engaged in Market Access Program (MAP) and Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP) initiatives, supporting U.S. hemp export development and international market integration.

### KEY RECOMMENDATION:

USDA should adopt a Fit-for-Purpose (FFP) framework, aligning reporting requirements with production type, intended use, and compliance risk.

### IMPORTANT ISSUE:

The current uniform reporting structure is not only administratively inefficient, but also actively inhibiting the development of U.S. fiber and grain hemp markets by imposing compliance costs that are disproportionate to risk. This places U.S. producers at a competitive disadvantage relative to international markets where industrial hemp is regulated as a standard agricultural commodity.

### NIHC RECOMMENDS:

- Tiered reporting requirements based on risk profile
- Alignment of AMS and FSA reporting systems
- Improved data segmentation across production types
- Reduced administrative burden through automation



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A Fit-for-Purpose approach will improve data quality, reduce burden, and enhance U.S. competitiveness in global hemp markets.

## FULL COMMENTS

### I. Necessity and Practical Utility of the Information Collected

NIHC agrees that core information—such as producer identification, acreage, and compliance outcomes—is necessary for USDA to administer the Domestic Hemp Production Program.

However, the current information collection framework reflects a uniform, THC-centric compliance model developed during the early implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill. This model does not fully align with the current structure of the hemp industry, which encompasses multiple distinct production systems with varying risk profiles and end uses.

The current THC-centric reporting framework is not simply misaligned; it is structurally incompatible with the majority of U.S. hemp production. By applying a cannabinoid compliance model to fiber and grain systems, USDA is regulating low-risk agricultural commodities as if they were controlled substances. This results in unnecessary compliance burden, distorted data collection, and suppressed market development in sectors that present negligible regulatory risk.

NIHC recommends that USDA adopt a Fit-for-Purpose (FFP) [\[https://nihcoa.com/advocacy/approach\]](https://nihcoa.com/advocacy/approach) to information collection. Under this framework, reporting requirements would be calibrated based on the intended use, production method, and compliance risk profile of the crop.

A Fit-for-Purpose (FFP) framework should be implemented as a formal classification system within USDA reporting architecture, where reporting obligations are explicitly tied to production category (fiber, grain, cannabinoid), end-use pathway, and compliance risk profile. This is not a conceptual adjustment; it is a structural redesign of the reporting system to reflect the biological and economic realities of the crop.

For example:

Fiber and grain production systems present low compliance risk relative to THC thresholds and should be subject to streamlined reporting requirements; Floral and cannabinoid production systems may warrant more robust reporting and oversight due to higher regulatory sensitivity.

The failure to differentiate between industrial hemp (fiber and grain) and cannabinoid production within reporting requirements continues to reinforce a regulatory framework that conflates fundamentally different agricultural systems. A Fit-for-Purpose approach would formalize this distinction, enabling USDA to treat industrial hemp as a conventional commodity crop while maintaining appropriate oversight for cannabinoid production.



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A Fit-for-Purpose approach would ensure that USDA collects information that is both necessary and relevant, improving program effectiveness without imposing unnecessary burdens.

## II. Accuracy of USDA's Burden Estimates

USDA estimates an average reporting burden of 0.41 hours per response. Based on NIHC member feedback across the value chain, this estimate significantly understates the cumulative administrative burden experienced by regulated entities.

While USDA estimates an average burden of 0.41 hours per response, NIHC member feedback indicates that real-world compliance workflows, particularly those involving geospatial reporting, multi-agency reconciliation, and disposal documentation, can require several hours per reporting cycle, especially for multi-lot operations. This represents a material underestimation of actual administrative burden.

This burden is driven not only by individual form completion, but by:  
Duplicative reporting requirements across AMS and the Farm Service Agency (FSA), particularly related to acreage reporting (FSA-578); Monthly reporting obligations for State and Tribal plans; Geospatial data entry requirements, often requiring specialized tools or third-party support; Disposal and remediation documentation, including for marginal exceedances that present minimal risk.

The current burden estimate fails to account for cumulative compliance time across overlapping federal reporting systems, resulting in a materially incomplete representation of real-world operational impact.

Importantly, the burden is exacerbated by the application of a single reporting framework across fundamentally different production systems. This results in disproportionate administrative requirements for low-risk production categories, particularly fiber and grain operations.

NIHC recommends that USDA revisit its burden estimation methodology to reflect real-world compliance workflows, including time associated with data reconciliation, inter-agency coordination, and administrative overhead.

## III. Enhancing the Quality, Utility, and Clarity of the Information Collected

NIHC supports efforts to improve the quality and usefulness of USDA hemp data and recommends the following:

### 1. Data Alignment and Integration

Align AMS reporting requirements with FSA acreage reporting (FSA-578) to eliminate inconsistencies and reduce reporting errors.



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The current dual-reporting structure between AMS and FSA represents a systemic inefficiency within federal program design. Producers are required to submit overlapping datasets through separate systems that are not interoperable, creating avoidable redundancy, increased error rates, and administrative friction.

2. Standardized Definitions  
Clarify key terms such as:  
"Remediation"  
"Disposal"  
"Harvested acreage"

Inconsistent interpretation of these terms across jurisdictions reduces data reliability and complicates compliance.

3. Production-Type Segmentation (FFP Application)  
Structure data collection to distinguish amongst:
  - a.) Fiber production
  - b.) Grain/seed production
  - c.) Floral/cannabinoid production
  - d.) Nursery and R&D operations

This segmentation would significantly improve USDA's ability to:  
Evaluate domestic market development;  
Support export promotion initiatives;  
Inform future policy and regulatory decisions.

A Fit-for-Purpose data structure would enhance both regulatory oversight and economic analysis, aligning USDA data collection with real-world industry dynamics.

IV. Reducing Respondent Burden Through Modernization and Fit-for-Purpose Implementation  
Consistent with PRA and E-Government Act objectives, NIHC strongly supports modernization and system integration to reduce administrative burden.

NIHC recommends:

1. Interoperable Reporting Systems  
Development of a single, integrated reporting interface shared by AMS and FSA, allowing for:  
Auto-population of recurring data fields;  
Elimination of duplicative submissions;  
Improved data consistency.



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## 2. Tiered Reporting Requirements (FFP Framework)

Implement tiered reporting obligations based on production purpose and compliance risk.

For example:

Reduced reporting frequency and simplified requirements for low-risk categories (e.g., fiber and grain); Standard reporting requirements for moderate-risk categories;  
Enhanced reporting and traceability for higher-risk categories.

## 3. Automation and Digital Tools

Expand use of:

- a.) Electronic submissions;
- b.) Standardized data formats;
- c.) Automated validation tools to reduce errors and resubmissions.

A Fit-for-Purpose approach to burden reduction would improve compliance rates while allowing producers and businesses to focus on productivity, innovation, and market development.

## Conclusion

NIHC supports USDA's continued administration of the Domestic Hemp Production Program and recognizes the importance of information collection in ensuring regulatory oversight and program integrity.

At the same time, this PRA review presents a critical opportunity to modernize the program by aligning information collection with the diverse production systems and market realities of the U.S. hemp industry.

This PRA review represents a critical inflection point. Without structural adjustment to a Fit-for-Purpose reporting framework, USDA risks continuing a system that misallocates regulatory resources, burdens low-risk producers, and constrains the development of domestic and export markets. NIHC strongly urges USDA to act on this opportunity to modernize the program in alignment with current industry realities.

NIHC respectfully recommends that USDA adopt a Fit-for-Purpose framework for information collection—one that calibrates reporting requirements based on production type, intended use, and compliance risk. This approach will:

- a.) Improve data quality and utility;
- b.) Reduce unnecessary administrative burden;
- c.) Enhance USDA's ability to support domestic growth and international competitiveness of U.S. hemp.



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We appreciate AMS's consideration of these comments and welcome continued engagement as the program evolves.

Respectfully submitted,

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