

SOURCE: 64 FR 33373, June 23, 1999, unless otherwise noted.

### § 11.1 Definitions.

For purposes of this part:

*Adverse decision* means an administrative decision made by an officer, employee, or committee of an agency that is adverse to a participant. The term includes a denial of equitable relief by an agency or the failure of an agency to issue a decision or otherwise act on the request or right of the participant within timeframes specified by agency program statutes or regulations or within a reasonable time if timeframes are not specified in such statutes or regulations. The term does not include a decision over which the Board of Contract Appeals has jurisdiction.

*Agency* means:

- (1) The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC);
- (2) The Farm Service Agency (FSA);
- (3) The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC);
- (4) The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS);
- (5) The Risk Management Agency (RMA);
- (6) The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS);
- (7) Rural Development (RD);
- (8) The Rural Housing Service (RHS);
- (9) The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) (but not for programs authorized by the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 or the Rural Telephone Bank Act, 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*);
- (10) A State, county, or area committee established under section 8(b)(5) of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C. 590h (b)(5)); and
- (11) Any predecessor or successor agency to the above-named agencies, and any other agency or office of the Department which the Secretary may designate.

*Agency record* means all the materials maintained by an agency related to an adverse decision which are submitted to the Division by an agency for consideration in connection with an appeal under this part, including all materials prepared or reviewed by the agency during its consideration and decision-making process, but shall not include records or information not related to

the adverse decision at issue. All materials contained in the agency record submitted to the Division shall be deemed admitted as evidence for purposes of a hearing or a record review under § 11.8.

*Agency representative* means any person, whether or not an attorney, who is authorized to represent the agency in an administrative appeal under this part.

*Appeal* means a written request by a participant asking for review by the National Appeals Division of an adverse decision under this part.

*Appellant* means any participant who appeals an adverse decision in accordance with this part. Unless separately set forth in this part, the term "appellant" includes an authorized representative.

*Authorized representative* means any person, whether or not an attorney, who is authorized in writing by a participant, consistent with § 11.6(c), to act for the participant in an administrative appeal under this part. The authorized representative may act on behalf of the participant except when the provisions of this part require action by the participant or appellant personally.

*Case record* means all the materials maintained by the Secretary related to an adverse decision: The case record includes both the agency record and the hearing record.

*Days* means calendar days unless otherwise specified.

*Department* means the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

*Director* means the Director of the Division or a designee of the Director.

*Division* means the National Appeals Division established by this part.

*Equitable relief* means relief which is authorized under section 326 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 (7 U.S.C. 1339a) and other laws administered by the agency.

*Ex parte communication* means an oral or written communication to any officer or employee of the Division with respect to which reasonable prior notice to all parties is not given, but it

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shall not include requests for status reports, or inquiries on Division procedure, in reference to any matter or proceeding connected with the appeal involved.

*Hearing*, except with respect to § 11.5, means a proceeding before the Division to afford a participant the opportunity to present testimony or documentary evidence or both in order to have a previous determination reversed and to show why an adverse determination was in error.

*Hearing Officer* means an individual employed by the Division who conducts the hearing and determines appeals of adverse decisions by any agency.

*Hearing record* means all documents, evidence, and other materials generated in relation to a hearing under § 11.8.

*Implement* means the taking of action by an agency of the Department in order fully and promptly to effectuate a final determination of the Division.

*Participant* means any individual or entity who has applied for, or whose right to participate in or receive, a payment, loan, loan guarantee, or other benefit in accordance with any program of an agency to which the regulations in this part apply is affected by a decision of such agency. The term does not include persons whose claim(s) arise under:

(1) Programs subject to various proceedings provided for in 7 CFR part 1;

(2) Programs governed by Federal contracting laws and regulations (appealable under other rules and to other forums, including to the Department's Board of Contract Appeals under 7 CFR part 24);

(3) The Freedom of Information Act (appealable under 7 CFR part 1, subpart A);

(4) Suspension and debarment disputes, including, but not limited to, those falling within the scope of 7 CFR parts 1407 and 3017;

(5) Export programs administered by the Commodity Credit Corporation;

(6) Disputes between reinsured companies and the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation;

(7) Tenant grievances or appeals prosecutable under the provisions of 7 CFR part 1944, subpart L, under the multi-

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family housing program carried out by RHS;

(8) Personnel, equal employment opportunity, and other similar disputes with any agency or office of the Department which arise out of the employment relationship;

(9) The Federal Tort Claims Act, 28 U.S.C. 2671 *et seq.*, or the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act of 1964, 31 U.S.C. 3721;

(10) Discrimination complaints prosecutable under the nondiscrimination regulations at 7 CFR parts 15, 15a, 15b, 15e, and 15f; or

(11) Section 361, *et seq.*, of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1361, *et seq.*) involving Tobacco Marketing Quota Review Committees.

*Record review* means an appeal considered by the Hearing Officer in which the Hearing Officer's determination is based on the agency record and other information submitted by the appellant and the agency, including information submitted by affidavit or declaration.

*Secretary* means the Secretary of Agriculture.

### § 11.2 General statement.

(a) This part sets forth procedures for proceedings before the National Appeals Division within the Department. The Division is an organization within the Department, subject to the general supervision of and policy direction by the Secretary, which is independent from all other agencies and offices of the Department, including Department officials at the state and local level. The Director of the Division reports directly to the Secretary of Agriculture. The authority of the Hearing Officers and the Director of the Division, and the administrative appeal procedures which must be followed by program participants who desire to appeal an adverse decision and by the agency which issued the adverse decision, are included in this part.

(b) Pursuant to section 212(e) of the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, Pub. L. 103-354 (the Act), 7 U.S.C. 6912(e), program participants shall seek review of an adverse decision before a Hearing Officer of the