

of tomatoes packed that day. The report shall include an accounting of the grade, size, maturity, and net weight of the containers packed in each such category. The total packout report shall be provided to the committee or its authorized agent in a timely fashion that allows the committee to compile a daily, industry-wide packout report.

(f) *Assessments.* Handlers shall pay assessments as provided in §966.42. Assessment will be based on inspection certificates supplied to the committee by the Federal-State Inspection Service.

(g) *Definitions.* *Hydroponic tomatoes* means tomatoes grown in solution without soil; *greenhouse tomatoes* means tomatoes grown indoors; *specialty packed red ripe tomatoes* means tomatoes which at the time of inspection are #5 or #6 color (according to color classification requirements in the U.S. tomato standards) with their calyx ends and stems attached and cell packed in a single layer container; and *producer field-packed tomatoes* means tomatoes which at the time of inspection are #3 color or higher (according to color classification requirements in the U.S. tomato standards), that are picked and place packed in new containers in the field by a producer as defined in §966.150 and transferred to a registered handler's facilities for final preparation for market. A *Certified Tomato Repacker* is a repacker of tomatoes in the regulated area who has the facilities for handling, regrading, resorting, and repacking tomatoes into consumer sized packages and has been certified as such by the committee. *Processing* as used in §§966.120 and 966.323 means the manufacture of any tomato product which has been converted into juice, or preserved by any commercial process, including canning, dehydrating, drying, and the addition of chemical substances. *U.S. tomato standards* means the revised United States Standards for Fresh Tomatoes (7 CFR 51.1855 through 51.1877), effective October 1, 1991, as amended, or variations thereof specified in this section. Other terms in this section shall have the same meaning as when used in Marketing Agreement No. 125, as

amended, and this part, and the U.S. tomato standards.

[52 FR 46347, Dec. 7, 1987, as amended at 53 FR 3191, Feb. 4, 1988; 54 FR 51297, Dec. 14, 1989; 56 FR 51148, Oct. 10, 1991; 57 FR 27351, June 19, 1992; 58 FR 57719, Oct. 27, 1993; 59 FR 51091, Oct. 7, 1994; 60 FR 57907, Nov. 24, 1995; 61 FR 55731, Oct. 29, 1996; 63 FR 146, Jan. 5, 1998; 63 FR 12401, Mar. 13, 1998; 63 FR 54559, Oct. 13, 1998; 64 FR 45413, Aug. 20, 1999; 65 FR 66495, Nov. 6, 2000; 66 FR 48532, Sept. 21, 2001]

EDITORIAL NOTE: After January 1, 1979, "Budget of Expenses and Rate of Assessment" regulations (e.g., sections .200 through .299) and "Handling" regulations (e.g., sections .300 through .399) which are in effect for a year or less, will not be carried in the Code of Federal Regulations. For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting these regulations, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and on GPO Access.

## PART 979—MELONS GROWN IN SOUTH TEXAS

### Subpart—Order Regulating Handling

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979.304 Handling regulation.

AUTHORITY: 7 U.S.C. 601-674.

SOURCE: 44 FR 22038, Apr. 13, 1979, unless otherwise noted.

## Subpart—Order Regulating Handling

### DEFINITIONS

#### § 979.1 Secretary.

*Secretary* means the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States, or any other officer or employee of the Department of Agriculture to whom authority has heretofore been delegated, or to whom authority may hereafter be delegated, to act in his stead.

#### § 979.2 Act.

*Act* means Public Act No. 10, 73d Congress (May 12, 1933), as amended and as reenacted and amended by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (sections 1-19, 48 Stat. 31, as amended; 7 U.S.C. 601-674).

#### § 979.3 Person.

*Person* means an individual, partnership, corporation, association, or any other business unit.

#### § 979.4 Production area.

*Production area* means the counties of Bee, Brooks, Cameron, Duval, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio, Starr, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata in the State of Texas.

#### § 979.5 Melons.

*Melons* means all varieties of *Cucumis melo*, commonly called muskmelons and including but not limited to varieties *reticulatus* and *inodorus*, grown in the production area. Such varieties include cantaloupes, honeydew and honey ball melons. Watermelons (*Citrullus lanatus*) are not included in the foregoing definition.

#### § 979.6 Handler.

*Handler* is synonymous with *shipper* and means any person (except a common or contract carrier of melons

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owned by another person) who handles melons or causes melons to be handled.

**§ 979.7 Handle.**

*Handle* or *ship* means to harvest, grade, package, sell, transport, or in any other way to place melons grown in the production area, or cause such melons to be placed, in the current of commerce within the production area or between the production area and any point outside thereof. Such term shall not include the transportation, sale, or delivery within the production area of field-run melons to a person for the purpose of having such melons prepared for market.

**§ 979.8 Grower.**

*Grower* is synonymous with *producer* and means any person engaged in a proprietary capacity in the production of melons for market.

**§ 979.9 Committee.**

*Committee* means the South Texas Melon Committee established pursuant to § 979.22.

**§ 979.10 Fiscal period.**

*Fiscal period* means the annual period beginning and ending on such dates as may be approved by the Secretary pursuant to recommendations of the committee.

**§ 979.11 Grade, size, and maturity.**

*Grade, size, and maturity* mean, respectively, any of the officially established grade, size, or maturity definitions as set forth in the U.S. Standards for Grades of Cantaloupes (§§ 2851.475 through 2851.494(c) of this title) or U.S. Standards for Grades of Honey Dew and Honey Ball Type Melons (§§ 2851.3740–2851.3749 of this title), including amendments, modifications, or variations thereof, or, such other grades, sizes, and maturities as may be recommended by the committee and approved by the Secretary.

**§ 979.12 Grading.**

*Grading* is synonymous with *preparing melons for commercial market* and means sorting or separation of melons into grades, sizes, maturities, or packs or any combination thereof, for handling.

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**§ 979.13 Pack.**

*Pack* means a quantity of melons specified by grade, size, weight, or count, or by type or conditions of container, or any combination of these recommended by the committee and approved by the Secretary.

**§ 979.14 Container.**

*Container* means any carton, crate, box, bag, hamper, pallet bin, package, basket, bulk load, or any other type of receptacle used in handling melons.

**§ 979.15 Varieties.**

*Varieties* means and includes all classifications, subdivisions, or types or melons according to those definitive characteristics now and hereinafter recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or recommended by the committee, and approved by the Secretary.

**§ 979.16 Export.**

*Export* means shipment of melons to any destination which is not within the 48 contiguous States, or the District of Columbia, of the United States.

**§ 979.17 District.**

*District* means each of the geographic divisions of the production area initially established pursuant to § 979.24 or as reestablished pursuant to § 979.25.

**§ 979.18 Part and subpart.**

*Part* means the Order Regulating the handling of Melons Grown in South Texas and all rules and regulations and supplementary orders issued thereunder. The aforesaid Order Regulating the Handling of Melons Grown in South Texas shall be a *subpart* of such *part*.

COMMITTEE

**§ 979.22 Establishment and membership.**

(a) There is hereby established a South Texas Melon Committee, consisting of ten (10) members, to administer the terms and provisions of this part. Six members shall be growers, three members shall be handlers, and one shall be a public member. Each shall have an alternate who shall have the same qualifications as the member.

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(b) Each member, other than the public member, shall be an individual who is, prior to his selection and during his term of office (1) a resident of the production area, and (2) a grower or handler, or an officer or employee of a grower or handler, or of growers' cooperative marketing organization.

(c) Five members shall be growers from District No. 1 and one member shall be a grower from District No. 2. No person, if he handles melons, shall be eligible for selection as a grower member on the committee unless all of the melons handled by him during the fiscal period immediately preceding his proposed selection to the committee were his own production or unless such person is an officer or employee of a growers' cooperative marketing association. Three members shall be handlers from District No. 1.

(d) The public member and alternate shall be a resident of the production area and be neither a grower nor a handler and shall have no direct financial interest in the commercial production, financing, buying, packing or marketing of melons, except as a consumer, nor shall such person be a director, officer or employee of any firm so engaged.

### § 979.23 Term of office.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (b) of this section, the term of office of committee members and their respective alternates shall be for two years and shall begin as of March 1 and end the last day of February or for such other two year period as the committee may recommend and the Secretary approve. The terms shall be so determined that approximately one-half of the total committee membership shall terminate each year. Members and alternates shall serve in such capacity for the portion of the term of office for which they are selected and have qualified, and until their respective successors are selected and have qualified;

(b) The term of office of the initial members and alternates shall begin on the effective date of this subpart. Approximately one-half the initial committee members and alternates shall serve for a 1 year term.

### § 979.24 Districts.

To determine a basis for selecting committee members, the following districts of the production area are hereby initially established:

*District No. 1:* (Valley) the counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Brooks, Kleberg, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, and Willacy in the State of Texas.

*District No. 2:* (Laredo-Coastal Bend) the counties of Zapata, Webb, Duval, Jim Wells, Nueces, San Patricio, La Salle, McMullen, Live Oak, Bee, and Refugio in the State of Texas.

### § 979.25 Redistricting.

The committee may recommend, and the Secretary may approve, the reapportionment of members among districts, and the reestablishment of districts within the production area. In recommending any such changes, the committee shall give consideration to:

(a) Shifts in melon acreage within the districts and within the production area during recent years;

(b) The importance of new production in its relation to existing districts;

(c) The equitable relationship of committee membership and districts; and

(d) Other relevant factors. No change in districting or in apportionment of members within districts may become effective less than 30 days prior to the date on which terms of office begin each year and no recommendations for such redistricting or reapportionment may be made less than 6 months prior to such date.

### § 979.26 Nominations.

(a) *Initial members.* For nominations to the initial committee, the meeting or meetings may be sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or by any agency or group requested to do so by the Department. The nominations, resulting from these meetings, for each of the six initial grower and three initial handler members of the committee, together with nomination for the initial alternate members for each position shall be submitted to the Secretary prior to the effective date of this subpart.

(b) *Successor members.* (1) The committee shall hold or cause to be held not later than January 15 of each year, or such other date as may be specified

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by the Secretary, a meeting or meetings of growers and handlers in each district for the purpose of designating at least one nominee for each position as member and for each position as alternate member of the committee which is vacant, or which is about to become vacant;

(2) The names of nominees shall be supplied to the Secretary at such time and in such manner and form as he may prescribe;

(3) Only growers may participate in designating grower nominees and only handlers may participate in designating handler nominees to the committee;

(4) Only growers and handlers who are present at such nomination meetings, or represented at such meetings by a duly authorized employee, may participate in the nomination and election of nominees for members and their alternates.

(c) Each person, whether grower or handler, is entitled to cast only one vote on behalf of himself, his agents, subsidiaries, affiliates, and representatives in designating nominees for committee members and alternates. An eligible voter's privilege of casting only one vote shall be construed to permit a voter to cast one vote for each position to be filled;

(d) The public member and alternate member shall be nominated by the members of the committee. The public member and alternate member shall not be growers or handlers, or employees of growers or handlers. The committee shall recommend rules for receiving names of persons to be considered for nomination to the public member and alternate positions. Rules shall also be recommended for establishing eligibility of persons nominated to the public member and alternate positions. The persons nominated for the public member and alternate positions shall be submitted by the incumbent committee to the Secretary by January 15, or such other date recommended by the committee and approved by the Secretary, of the years the terms expire together with information deemed pertinent by the committee or as requested by the Secretary. The names of the nominees for the initial public member and alternate shall be sub-

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mitted to the Secretary not later than 90 days after the first regular meeting of the initial South Texas Melon Committee.

### § 979.27 Selection.

Committee members and alternates shall be selected by the Secretary on the basis of representation provided for in § 979.22 from nominations made pursuant to § 979.26.

### § 979.28 Failure to nominate.

If nominations, including initial nominations, are not made within the time and manner prescribed in § 979.26, the Secretary may, without regard to nominations, select the members and alternates on the basis of the representation provided for in § 979.22.

### § 979.29 Acceptance.

Any person selected by the Secretary as member or as an alternate member of the committee shall, prior to serving as such, qualify by filing a written acceptance with the Secretary within the time period specified by the Secretary.

### § 979.30 Vacancies.

To fill committee vacancies, the Secretary may select members or alternates from nominees on the latest nomination reports or from nominations made in the manner specified in § 979.26 or from other eligible persons. If the names of nominees to fill any such vacancy are not made available to the Secretary within 30 days after such vacancy occurs, the vacancy may be filled without regard to nomination, but such selection shall be made on the basis of representation provided for in § 979.22.

### § 979.31 Alternate member.

An alternate member of the committee shall act in the place and stead of the member for whom he is an alternate, during such member's absence or when designated to do so by such member. In the event both a member of the committee and his alternate are unable to attend a committee meeting, the member or his alternate or the committee, in that order, may designate another alternate from the same district and the same group (handler or grower) to serve in such member's

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stead. In the event of the death, removal, resignation, or disqualification of a member, his alternate shall act for him until a successor of such member is selected and has qualified. The committee may request the attendance of alternates at any or all meetings, notwithstanding the expected or actual presence of the respective members.

### § 979.32 Procedure.

(a) Seven members of the committee shall be necessary to constitute a quorum and the same number of concurring votes shall be required to pass any motion or approve any committee actions.

(b) In assembled meetings all votes shall be cast in person. However, the committee may provide for meetings by telephone, telegraph, or other means of communication and any vote cast at such meetings shall be promptly confirmed in writing and recorded in the minutes of each meeting so as to reflect how each member voted.

### § 979.33 Expenses.

Members and alternates, when serving as members of the committee, shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for such expenses authorized by the committee and necessarily incurred by them in attending committee meetings and in the performance of their duties under this part: *Provided*, That the committee at its discretion may request the attendance of one or more alternates at any or all meetings notwithstanding the expected or actual presence of the respective members and may pay expenses as aforesaid.

### § 979.34 Powers.

The committee shall have the following powers:

(a) To administer the provisions of this part in accordance with its terms;

(b) To make rules and regulations to effectuate the terms and provisions of this part:

(c) To receive, investigate, and report to the Secretary complaints of violation of the provisions of this part; and

(d) To recommend to the Secretary amendments to this part.

### § 979.35 Duties.

The committee shall have, among others, the following duties:

(a) As soon as practicable after the beginning of each term of office, to meet and organize, to select a chairman and such other officers as may be necessary, to select subcommittees, and to adopt such rules, regulations, and bylaws for the conduct of its business as it deems necessary, and to recommend nominees for the public member and alternate;

(b) To act as intermediary between the Secretary and any grower or handler;

(c) To furnish to the Secretary such available information as he may request;

(d) To appoint such employees, agents, and representatives as it may deem necessary, to determine the compensation and define the duties of each such person, and to protect the handling of committee funds through fidelity bonds;

(e) To investigate from time to time and to assemble data on the growing, harvesting, shipping, and marketing conditions with respect to melons;

(f) To recommend research projects to the Secretary in accordance with this part;

(g) To notify handlers of each meeting of the committee to consider recommendations for regulations and of all regulatory actions taken which might affect growers or handlers and to provide such notification to producers through appropriate news releases or such other means as may be available to the committee;

(h) To give the Secretary the same notice of meetings of the committee and its subcommittee as is given to its members;

(i) To prepare a marketing policy;

(j) To recommend marketing regulations to the Secretary;

(k) To recommend rules and procedures for, and to make determination in connection with appropriate safeguards;

(l) To keep minutes, books, and records which clearly reflect all of the acts and transactions of the committee and such minutes, books, and records shall be subject to examination at any time by the Secretary or his authorized

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agent or representative. Minutes of each committee meeting shall be reported promptly to the Secretary;

(m) Prior to or at the beginning of each fiscal period, to prepare a budget of anticipated expenses for such fiscal period, together with a report thereon;

(n) To prepare periodic statements of the financial operations of the committee and to make copies of each such statement available to producers and handlers for examination at the office of the committee;

(o) To prepare and forward to the Secretary, prior to the last day of each fiscal period, an annual report, and make a copy available to each handler and grower who requests it. This annual report shall contain at least:

(1) A complete review of the regulatory operations during the fiscal period;

(2) An appraisal of the effect of such regulatory operations upon the melon industry; and

(3) Any recommendations for changes in the program.

(p) To cause the books of the committee to be audited by a competent accountant at least once each fiscal period and at such other times as the committee may deem necessary or as the Secretary may request. The report of such audit shall show the receipt and expenditure of funds collected pursuant to this part. Two copies of such report shall be furnished to the Secretary and a copy of each such report shall be made available at the principal office of the committee for inspection by growers and handlers; and

(q) To consult, cooperate, and exchange information with other marketing order committees and other individuals or agencies in connection with all proper activities and objectives under this part.

**EXPENSES AND ASSESSMENTS**

**§979.40 Expenses.**

The committee is authorized to incur such expenses as the Secretary finds are reasonable and likely to be incurred during each fiscal period by the committee for its maintenance and functioning, and for such purposes as the Secretary, pursuant to this subpart, determines to be appropriate.

Each first handler's pro rata share of such expenses shall be proportionate to the ratio between the total quantity of melons handled by him as the first handler thereof during a fiscal period and the total quantity of melons so handled by all handlers as first handlers thereof during such fiscal period.

**§979.41 Budget.**

Prior to or at the beginning of each fiscal period and as may be necessary thereafter, the committee shall prepare an estimated budget of income and expenditures necessary for the administration of this part. The committee may recommend a rate of assessment calculated to provide adequate funds to defray its proposed expenditures. The committee shall present such budget to the Secretary with an accompanying report showing the basis for its calculations.

**§979.42 Assessments.**

(a) The funds to cover the committee's expenses shall be acquired by the levying of assessments upon handlers as provided for in this subpart. Each handler who first handles melons shall pay assessments to the committee upon demand, which assessments shall be in payment of such handler's pro rata share of the committee's expenses;

(b) Assessments shall be levied during each fiscal period upon handlers at a rate per unit established by the Secretary. Such rates may be established upon the basis of the committee's recommendations and other available information;

(c) At any time during or after a given fiscal period the committee may recommend the approval of an amended budget and an increase in the rate of assessment in conformance with §979.41. Upon the basis of such recommendations, or other available information, the Secretary may approve an amended budget and increase the assessment rate. Such increase shall be applicable to all melons which were handled by each first handler thereof during such fiscal period;

(d) The payment of assessments for the maintenance and functioning of the committee may be required irrespective of whether particular provisions of

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this part are suspended or become inoperative;

(e) To provide funds for the administration of the provisions of this part the committee may accept the payment of assessments in advance;

(f) If a handler does not pay his assessment within the time prescribed by the committee, the assessment may be increased by a late payment charge or an interest charge at rates prescribed by the committee with the approval of the Secretary.

### § 979.43 Accounting.

(a) All funds received by the committee pursuant to the provisions of this part shall be used solely for the purposes specified in this part. At the end of the fiscal period an annual financial audit shall be conducted by a competent accountant and two copies sent to the Secretary;

(b) The Secretary may at any time require the committee, its members and alternates, employees, agents, and all other persons to account for all receipts and disbursements, funds, property, or records for which they are responsible. Whenever any person ceases to be a member of the committee or alternate, he shall account to his successor, the committee, or to the person designated by the Secretary, for all receipts, disbursements, funds and property (including but not limited to books and other records) pertaining to the committee's activities for which he is responsible, and shall execute such assignments and other instruments as may be necessary or appropriate to vest in the successor, the committee, or person designated by the Secretary, the right to all such property and funds and all claims vested in such person;

(c) The committee may make recommendations to the Secretary for one or more of the members thereof, or any other person to act as a trustee for holding records, funds, or any other committee property during periods of suspension of this part, or during any period or periods when regulations under this part are not in effect, and, if the Secretary determines such action appropriate, he may direct that such person or persons may act as such trustee or trustees.

### § 979.44 Excess funds.

(a) If, at the end of a fiscal period the assessments collected are in excess of expenses incurred, each handler entitled to a proportionate refund of any such assessments which represent payments by the handler in excess of his pro rata share, shall be credited with such refund against his operations of the following fiscal period or such excess shall be accounted for in accordance with one of the following:

(1) The committee, with the approval of the Secretary, may establish an operating monetary reserve and may carry over to subsequent fiscal periods excess funds in a reserve so established, except funds in the reserve shall not exceed approximately two fiscal periods' expenses. Such reserve funds may be used (i) to defray any expenses authorized under this part, (ii) to defray expenses during any fiscal period prior to the time assessment income is sufficient to cover such expenses, (iii) to cover deficits incurred during any fiscal period when assessment income is less than expenses, (iv) to defray expenses incurred during any period when any or all provisions of this part are suspended or are inoperative, and (v) to cover necessary expenses of liquidation in the event of termination of this part. Any funds remaining after termination should be refunded to handlers on a pro rata basis. If it is found impracticable to return such remaining funds to handlers, such funds shall be disposed of in such manner as the Secretary may determine to be appropriate;

(2) If such excess is not retained in a reserve or used to defray necessary expenses of liquidation, as provided for in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, it shall be refunded proportionately to the handlers from whom collected, except any sum paid by any handler in excess of his pro rata share of the expenses during any fiscal period may be applied by the committee at the end of such fiscal period to any outstanding obligations due the committee from such handler.

(b) [Reserved]

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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**§ 979.48 Research and development.**

The committee, with the approval of the Secretary, may establish or provide for the establishment of production research, marketing research, and development projects designed to assist, improve, or promote the marketing, distribution, consumption, or efficient production of melons. The expenses of such projects shall be paid from funds collected pursuant to § 979.42.

REGULATIONS

**§ 979.50 Marketing policy.**

(a) Prior to or at the same time initial recommendations in any fiscal period are made pursuant to § 979.51, and as the Secretary may require, the committee shall prepare a marketing policy statement. Notice of such marketing policy shall be given to producers, handlers, and other interested parties by bulletins, newspapers or other appropriate media, and copies thereof shall be submitted to the Secretary and shall be available at the committee office to all interested parties;

(b) Marketing policy statements relating to recommendations for regulations shall give appropriate consideration to melon supplies for the remainder of the season, with special consideration to:

(1) Estimates of total supplies including grade, size, and quality thereof, in the production area;

(2) Estimates of supplies of melons in competing areas;

(3) Estimates of supplies of other competing commodities;

(4) Market prices by grades, sizes, containers, and packs;

(5) Anticipated marketing problems;

(6) Level and trend of consumer income; and

(7) Other relevant factors.

**§ 979.51 Recommendations for regulations.**

Upon complying with requirements of § 979.50, the committee may recommend regulations to the Secretary when it finds that such regulations as are authorized in this order will tend

to effectuate the declared policy of the act.

**§ 979.52 Issuance of regulations.**

(a) The Secretary shall limit by regulation the handling of melons when he finds from the recommendations and information submitted by the committee, or from other available information, that such regulations would tend to effectuate the declared policy of the act.

(b) Such regulations may:

(1) Limit the handling of particular grades, sizes, maturities, qualities, or packs, or any combination thereof, of any or all varieties of melons during any period;

(2) Limit the handling of particular grades, sizes, maturities, qualities, or packs of melons differently for different varieties, for different markets, for different containers, or any combination of the foregoing, during any period;

(3) Fix the size, capacity, weight, dimension, or pack of the container, or containers, which may be used in the packaging or handling of melons, including appropriate container markings to identify the contents thereof.

(c) The regulations or any portions of such regulations issued hereunder may be amended, modified, suspended, or terminated by the Secretary whenever it is determined:

(1) That such action is warranted upon recommendation of the committee or other available information;

(2) That such action is essential to provide relief from inspection, assessment, or regulations under paragraph (b) of this section for minimum quantities less than customary commercial transactions; or

(3) That regulations issued hereunder obstruct or no longer tend to effectuate the declared policy of the act.

**§ 979.54 Handling for special purposes.**

Regulations in effect pursuant to §§ 979.42, 979.52, or 979.60 may be modified, suspended, or terminated by the Secretary, upon recommendation of the committee, to facilitate handling of melons for: (a) Relief or charity, (b) experimental purposes, (c) exports, and (d) other special purposes, which may

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be recommended by the committee and approved by the Secretary.

### § 979.55 Safeguards.

The committee, with the approval of the Secretary, may establish through rules and regulations, the requirements with respect to proof that shipments made pursuant to § 979.54 were handled and used for the purpose stated.

### § 979.56 Notification of regulations.

The Secretary shall promptly notify the committee of regulations issued and of any modification, suspension, or termination thereof. The committee shall give notice thereof to all handlers of melons in the production area. In addition, the committee shall make the information available to growers through appropriate news releases or such other means as may be available.

## INSPECTION

### § 979.60 Inspection and certification.

(a) Whenever the handling of melons is regulated pursuant to § 979.52 or at other times when recommended by the committee and approved by the Secretary, no handler shall handle melons unless they are inspected by an authorized representative of the Federal-State Inspection Service and are covered by a valid inspection certificate, except when relieved from such requirements pursuant to § 979.52(c), or § 979.54, or paragraph (b) of this section. The cost of such inspection shall be borne by the applicant.

(b) Regrading, resorting, repacking any lot of melons, or breaking any lot (without continuing identification of applicable inspection or subcertification thereof) shall invalidate any applicable inspection certificate insofar as the requirements of this section are concerned. No handler shall handle melons after a lot has been broken, regraded, repacked, or resorted, or in any other way additionally prepared for market, unless such melons are inspected by an authorized representative of the Federal or Federal-State Inspection Service. Such inspection requirements on regraded, resorted, repacked, or broken lots of melons may be modified, suspended or terminated

upon recommendation by the committee, and approval of the Secretary.

(c) Insofar as the requirements of this section are concerned, the length of time for which an inspection certificate is valid may be established by the committee with the approval of the Secretary.

(d) When melons are inspected in accordance with the requirements of this section, a copy of each inspection certificate issued shall be made available to the committee by the Inspection Service.

(e) The committee may recommend and the Secretary may require that no handler shall transport or cause the transportation of melons by motor vehicle or by other means unless such shipment is accompanied by a copy of the inspection certificate issued thereon, or such other documents as may be required by the committee. Such certificates or documents shall be surrendered to proper authorities at such time and in such manner as may be designated by the committee, with the approval of the Secretary.

## REPORTS

### § 979.80 Reports.

Upon request of the committee, made with the approval of the Secretary, each handler shall furnish to the committee, in such manner and form and at such time as it may prescribe, such reports and other information as may be necessary for the committee to perform its duties under this part.

(a) Such reports may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

(1) The number of acres of melons and the approximate dates planted, for all melons which will be handled by each handler;

(2) The quantities of melons received by a handler;

(3) Identification of the inspection certificates relating to the melons which were handled pursuant to § 979.52 or § 979.54 or both.

(b) All such reports shall be held under appropriate protective classification and custody by the committee, or duly appointed employees thereof, so that the information contained therein

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which may adversely affect the competitive position of any handler in relation to other handlers will not be disclosed. Compilations of general reports from data submitted by handlers is authorized, subject to the prohibition of disclosure of individual handlers' identities or operations.

(c) Each handler shall maintain for at least 2 succeeding years such records and documents on melons received by him as may be necessary to verify reports submitted to the committee pursuant to this section.

(d) For the purpose of assuring compliance with recordkeeping requirements and certifying reports of handlers, the Secretary and the committee, through their duly authorized employees or agents, shall have access to any premises where applicable records are located, and where melons are handled, and at any time during reasonable business hours shall be permitted to inspect such handler's premises and examine any and all records of such persons with respect to matters within the purview of this part.

(e) Any person filing a report, record, or application that is willfully misrepresented shall be subject to the legal penalties for such misrepresentation of Government reports.

### COMPLIANCE

#### § 979.81 Compliance.

Except as provided in this subpart, no handler shall handle melons, the handling of which has been prohibited by the Secretary in accordance with provisions of this subpart, or the rules and regulations thereunder, and no handler shall handle melons except in conformity with the provisions of this part.

### MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

#### § 979.82 Right of the Secretary.

The members of the committee (including successors and alternates) and any agents or employees appointed or employed by the committee shall be subject to removal or suspension by the Secretary, at any time. Each and every order, regulation, decisions, determination, or other act of the committee shall be subject to the con-

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tinuing right of the Secretary to disapprove of the same at any time. Upon such disapproval, the disapproved action of said committee shall be deemed null and void, except as to acts done in reliance thereon or in compliance therewith prior to such disapproval by the Secretary.

#### § 979.83 Effective time.

The provisions of this subpart or any amendment thereto shall become effective at such time as the Secretary may declare and shall continue in force until terminated in one of the ways specified in this subpart.

#### § 979.84 Termination.

(a) The Secretary shall, whenever he finds that any or all provisions of this subpart obstruct or do not tend to effectuate the declared policy of this act, terminate or suspend the operation of this subpart or such provision thereof.

(b) The Secretary shall terminate the provisions of this subpart at the end of the then current fiscal period whenever he finds that such termination is favored by a majority of the growers who, during a representative period determined by the Secretary, have been engaged in the production for market of melons within the production area: *Provided*, That such majority has during such representative period, produced for market more than 50 percent of the volume of such melons produced for market.

(c) The provisions for this subpart shall, in any event, terminate whenever the provisions of the Act authorizing them cease to be in effect.

#### § 979.85 Proceedings after termination.

(a) Upon the termination of the provisions of this subpart, the then functioning members of the committee shall continue as joint trustees for the purpose of settling the affairs of the committee by liquidating all funds and property then in the possession of or under control of the committee, including claims for any funds unpaid or property not delivered at the time of such termination. Action by said trusteeship shall require the concurrence of a majority of the said trustees.

(b) The said trustees shall continue in such capacity until discharged by

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the Secretary; shall, from time to time, account for all receipts and disbursements and deliver all property on hand, together with all books and records of the committee and of the trustees, to such persons as the Secretary may direct; and shall upon request of the Secretary, execute such assignments or other instruments necessary or appropriate to vest in such persons full title and right to all of the funds, property and claims vested in the committee or the trustees pursuant to this subpart.

(c) Any person to whom funds, property or claims have been transferred or delivered by the committee or its members, pursuant to this section, shall be subject to the same obligations imposed upon the members of the committee and upon the said trustees.

### § 979.86 Effect of termination or amendments.

Unless otherwise expressly provided by the Secretary, the termination of this subpart or of any regulation issued pursuant to this subpart, or the issuance of any amendments to either thereof, shall not (a) affect or waive any right, duty, obligation or liability which shall have arisen or which may thereafter arise in connection with any provision of this subpart, or (b) release or extinguish any violation of this subpart or any regulation issued under this subpart, or (c) affect or impair any rights or remedies of the Secretary or of any other person with respect to any such violation.

### § 979.87 Duration of immunities.

The benefits, privileges and immunities conferred upon any person by virtue of this subpart shall cease upon the termination of this subpart, except with respect to acts done under and during the existence of this subpart.

### § 979.88 Agents.

The Secretary may, by designation in writing, name any person, including any officer or employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to act as his agent or representative in connection with any of the provisions of this subpart.

### § 979.89 Derogation.

Nothing contained in this subpart is, or shall be construed to be, in derogation or in modification of the rights of the Secretary or of the United States to exercise any powers granted by the act or otherwise, or, in accordance with such powers, to act in the premises whenever such action is deemed advisable.

### § 979.90 Personal liability.

No member or alternate member of the committee nor any employee or agent thereof, shall be held personally responsible, either individually or jointly with others in any way whatever, to any handler or to any person for errors in judgment, mistakes or other acts, either of commission or omission, as such member, alternate, agent or employee, except for acts of dishonesty, willful misconduct or gross negligence.

### § 979.91 Separability.

If any provision of this subpart is declared invalid, or the applicability thereof to any person, circumstance, or thing is held invalid, the validity of the remainder of this subpart, or the applicability thereof to any other person, circumstance, or thing, shall not be affected thereby.

### § 979.92 Amendments.

Amendments to this subpart may be proposed from time to time, by the committee or by the Secretary.

### § 979.93 Counterparts.

This agreement may be executed in multiple counterparts and when one counterpart is signed by the Secretary, all such counterparts shall constitute, when taken together, one and the same instrument as if all signatures were contained in one original.<sup>1</sup>

### § 979.94 Additional parties.

After the effective date hereof, any handler may become a party to this agreement if a counterpart is executed by him and delivered to the Secretary. This agreement shall take effect as to

<sup>1</sup>Applicable only to the proposed marketing agreement.

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such new contracting party at the time such counterpart is delivered to the Secretary, and the benefits, privileges, and immunities conferred by this agreement shall then be effective as to such new contracting party.<sup>1</sup>

### § 979.95 Order with marketing agreement.

Each signatory handler hereby requests the Secretary to issue, pursuant to the act, an order providing for regulating the handling of melons in the same manner as is provided for in this agreement.<sup>1</sup>

## Subpart—Rules and Regulations

### GENERAL PROCEDURES

#### § 979.100 Order.

*Order* means Order No. 979 (§§ 979.1 to 979.92; 44 FR 22038) regulating the handling of melons grown in South Texas.

[44 FR 28780, May 17, 1979]

#### § 979.106 Registered handler.

For purposes of this part, a registered handler is a person who has adequate facilities for packing melons for market and who assumes initial responsibility for compliance with inspection, assessment, and other regulatory requirements on the handling of melons grown in the production area. Any person who wishes to become a registered handler shall make application for registration with the committee on forms furnished by the committee. If such applicant has facilities available which are determined by the committee as adequate for the packing of melons, such person may be approved as a registered handler. Growers who make deliveries of fieldrun melons to such registered handlers are hereby determined to be exempt from other applicable regulations pursuant to this part.

[44 FR 28780, May 17, 1979]

#### § 979.110 Fiscal period.

The fiscal period which began on May 17, 1979 (44 FR 28780) shall end September 30, 1979. Thereafter, each fiscal period shall begin on October 1 of each

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year and end on September 30 of the following year.

[44 FR 56684, Oct. 2, 1979]

#### § 979.112 Late payments.

Pursuant to § 979.42(f), late payments of assessments shall be subject to an interest charge of 1½ percent per month on the balance due. Assessments shall be deemed late 30 days after the billing date.

[55 FR 19720, May 11, 1990]

#### § 979.122 Eligibility requirements for public members.

(a) A public member shall represent a nonagricultural point of view, and shall not have a financial (or economic) interest in, or be closely associated with the production, processing, financing or marketing of melons.

(b) Public members should be able to devote sufficient time and express a willingness to attend committee activities regularly and to familiarize themselves with the background and economics of the industry.

(c) Public members must be residents of the production area.

(d) Public members shall be nominated by the South Texas Melon Committee and shall serve a two-year term which coincides with the term of office of producer or handler members of the committee.

[44 FR 28781, May 17, 1979]

#### § 979.126 Nomination procedures for public members.

(a) Names of candidates together with evidence of qualification for public membership on the South Texas Melon Committee shall be submitted to the committee at its business office.

(b) Questionnaires may be sent by the committee to those persons submitted as candidates, to determine their eligibility and interest in becoming a public member.

(c) The names of persons nominated for the public member and alternate positions shall be submitted by the incumbent committee to the Secretary by January 15 with such information as deemed pertinent by the committee or as requested by the Secretary.

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(d) Nomination of the initial public member shall be made as soon as possible but not later than 90 days after the first meeting of the committee.

[44 FR 28781, May 17, 1979]

### § 979.132 Procedure.

The committee shall be authorized to meet by telephone or other means of communication. Any vote at such a meeting shall be promptly confirmed in writing by each voter. On such occasions seven affirmative votes shall be necessary to approve any action. Telephone meetings shall be called only by the Committee chairman or vice-chairman acting in his stead.

[44 FR 28781, May 17, 1979]

### § 979.152 Handling of culls.

(a) The handling of culls, i.e., melons which fail to meet the grade, size, quality or other requirements established under § 979.52(b) of this part is prohibited unless such melons are:

(1) Mechanically spiked or mutilated at the packing shed rendering them unsuitable for fresh market; or

(2) Handled for special purpose outlets approved under § 979.54 of this part.

(b) As a safeguard against culls entering fresh market channels each handler under paragraph (a)(2) of this section shall apply for and obtain a certificate from the committee which shall require the handler to furnish such reports or other information as the committee may request.

[44 FR 28781, May 17, 1979]

### § 979.155 Safeguards.

(a) *Policy.* Whenever shipments of melons for special purposes pursuant to § 979.54 are relieved in whole or in part from regulations issued under § 979.52, the committee may require information and evidence on the manner, methods, and timing of such shipments as safeguards against the entry of any such melons in trade channels other than those for which intended. Such information and evidence shall include requirements set forth below with respect to Certificates of Privilege.

(b) *Qualification.* Before handling melons for special purposes which do not meet regulations issued pursuant to § 979.52, a handler, when required by

such regulations, must qualify with the committee to handle shipments for special purposes. To qualify one must (1) apply for and receive a Certificate of Privilege indicating the intent to so handle melons, (2) agree to comply with reporting and other requirements set forth in § 959.155 with respect to such shipments, and (3) receive approval of the committee, or its duly authorized agents, to so handle melons. Such approval will be based upon evidence furnished in the application for Certificate of Privilege and other information available to the committee.

(c) *Application.* (1) Applications for a Certificate of Privilege shall be made on forms furnished by the committee. Each application may contain, but need not be limited to, the name and address of the handler; the quantity by grade, size, quality and container of the melons to be shipped; the mode of transportation; the consignee; the destination; the purpose for which the melons are to be used; and certification to the United States Department of Agriculture and to the committee as to the truthfulness of the information shown thereon, and any other appropriate information or documents deemed necessary by the committee or its duly authorized agents for the purposes stated in § 979.155.

(2) The committee may require each handler making shipments of melons for export to include with his application a copy of the Department of Commerce Shippers Export Declaration Form No. 7525-V applicable to such shipment.

(d) *Approval.* The committee or its duly authorized agents shall give prompt consideration to each application for a Certificate of Privilege. Approval of an application, based upon the determination as to whether the information contained therein and other information available to the committee supports approval, shall be evidenced by the issuance of a Certificate of Privilege to the applicant. Each certificate shall cover a specified period and specified qualities and quantities of melons to be sold or transported to a designated consignee for the purpose declared.

(e) *Reports.* Each handler of melons shipping under Certificates of Privilege

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shall supply the committee with reports as requested by the committee, or its duly authorized agents, showing the name and address of the shipper; the car or truck identification; the loading point; destination; consignee; the inspection certificate number when inspection is required; and any other information deemed necessary by the committee.

(f) *Disqualification.* The committee from time to time may conduct surveys of handling of melons for special purposes requiring Certificates of Privilege to determine whether handlers are complying with the requirements and regulations applicable to such certificates. Whenever the committee finds that the handler or consignee is failing to comply with requirements and regulations applicable to handling of melons in special outlets and requiring such certificates, a Certificate or Certificates of Privilege issued such handler may be rescinded and subsequent certificates denied. Such disqualification shall apply to, and not exceed, a reasonable period of time as determined by the committee, but in no event shall it extend beyond the date of the succeeding fiscal period. Any handler who has a certificate rescinded or denied may appeal to the committee in writing for reconsideration of his disqualification.

[44 FR 28781, May 17, 1979]

### § 979.180 Reports.

Each handler shall furnish every two weeks during the planting season to the committee on a form provided by the committee the number of acres of cantaloupes and honey dew melons planted by the handler or growers for whom the handler packs melons during such period and the location of such plantings. However, during the first season of operation under the order each handler need only report the number of acres each of cantaloupes and honey dew melons planted together with the location of all such plantings.

[44 FR 28781, May 17, 1979, as amended at 64 FR 23759, May 4, 1999]

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### Subpart—Assessment Rates

#### § 979.219 Assessment rate.

On and after October 1, 2001, an assessment rate of \$0.06 per carton is established for South Texas melons.

[67 FR 11406, Mar. 14, 2002]

### Subpart—Handling Regulations

#### § 979.304 Handling regulation.

During the period beginning May 1 and ending on June 20 of each season no person shall handle cantaloupe or honeydew melons unless they meet the requirements of paragraphs (a) through (c), (d) or (e) and (f) of this section.

(a) *Grade requirements.* (1) Cantaloupes shall be U.S. Commercial grade or better, except that not more than 8 percent serious damage including not more than 5 percent decay shall be permitted.

(2) At least 50 percent of the honeydew melons in any lot shall meet the requirements of U.S. Commercial grade except that not more than 20 percent serious damage shall be allowed including not more than 10 percent for melons affected by decay. In addition, the combined juice from the edible portion of a sample of honeydew melons selected at random shall contain not less than 8 percent soluble solids as determined by an approved hand refractometer. Individual cartons shall contain not less than 25 percent U.S. Commercial or better quality.

(3) Individual packages may contain not more than double the specified lot tolerance.

(b) *Container requirements.* (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (b)(4), (d) or (e) and (f) of this section all cantaloupes shall be packed in fiberboard cartons with inside dimensions of not more than 17¼ inches nor less than 16¾ inches in length, not more than 13 inches nor less than 12¾ inches in width, and not more than 11¾ inches nor less than 9¾ inches in depth. All honeydew melons shall be packed in fiberboard cartons with inside dimensions of 17 inches long by 15¼ inches wide and not more than 7½ inches nor less than 6½ inches deep. A tolerance of ¼ inch for each dimension shall be permitted.

(2) Each carton shall be marked to indicate the count; the name, address, and zip code of the shipper; the name of the product; and the words "Produce of U.S.A." or "Product of U.S.A."

(3) If the carton in which the melons are packed is not clean and bright in appearance without marks, stains, or other evidence of previous use, the carton shall be conspicuously marked with the words "USED BOX" in letters not less than three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) inch high.

(4) Honeydew melons may be packed in rectangular or octagonal bulk containers having dimensions of 48 inches long by 40 inches wide by 24 to 36 inches deep. A tolerance of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch for each dimension shall be permitted.

(5) These container requirements shall not be applicable to melons sold to Federal agencies.

(c) *Inspection.* (1) No handler may handle any melons regulated hereunder, except pursuant to paragraphs (d) or (e) and (f) of this section, unless an inspection certificate has been issued covering them and the certificate is valid at the time of shipment. City and State destinations shall be listed on inspection certificates and release forms.

(2) No handler may transport by motor vehicle or cause such transportation of any shipment of melons for which an inspection certificate is required unless each such shipment is accompanied by a copy of the inspection certificate applicable thereto or the shipment release form furnished by the inspection service identifying truck lots to which a valid inspection certificate is applicable. A copy of such inspection certificate or shipment release form shall be surrendered upon request to Texas Department of Agriculture personnel designated by the committee.

(3) For purposes of operation under this part, each inspection certificate, shipment release form, or committee form required as evidence of inspection is hereby determined to be valid for a period not to exceed 72 hours following completion of inspection as shown on the certificate.

(4) Designated inspection stations will be located at the Texas Cooperative Inspection Program Office, 1301 W.

Expressway, Alamo (Phone (956) 787-4091 or 6881) and the Matt Dietz Packing Co., 4700 N. Santa Maria, Laredo (Phone (956) 723-9178 or 9170), to be available for handlers who do not have permanent packing facilities recognized by the committee.

(5) Handlers shall pay assessments on all assessable melons according to the provisions of § 979.42.

(d) *Minimum quantity exemption.* Any handler may handle, other than for resale, up to, but not to exceed 120 pounds net weight of melons per day without regard to the provisions of §§ 979.42, 979.52, 979.60, and 979.80, but this exemption shall not apply to any shipment or any portion thereof of over 120 pounds of melons.

(e) *Special purpose shipments.* (1) The requirements of paragraphs (a) through (c) of this section shall not apply to shipments for charity, relief, canning and freezing if a handler presents a Certificate of Privilege for such melons prior to handling them in accordance with § 979.155.

(2) Melons failing to meet the requirements of paragraphs (a) through (c) of this section and not exempt under paragraphs (d) or (e), and all melons discarded from the grading table shall either be mechanically spiked or mutilated or handled for special purpose outlets in accordance with § 979.152.

(3) *Experimental shipments.* (i) Upon approval by the committee, melons may be shipped for experimental purposes exempt from the container requirements specified in paragraph (b) of this section, but shall meet the grade and inspection requirements of paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section and the assessment requirements specified in § 979.219: *Provided*, That the melons are handled in accordance with safeguard provisions of paragraph (f) of this section.

(ii) Upon approval of the committee, melons may be shipped for testing in types and sizes of containers other than those specified in paragraphs (b) and (e)(4) of this section: *Provided*, That the melons are handled in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (f) of this section.

(4) The handling to any person of gift packages of melons not exceeding 25

pounds per package, individually addressed to such person and not for resale, is exempt from the container requirements of paragraph (b) of this section, but shall meet all assessment requirements of §979.42 and the grade and inspection requirements of paragraphs (a) and (c) respectively of this section.

(f) *Safeguards.* Each handler making shipments of melons for relief, charity, canning, freezing, or experimental purposes under paragraph (e) of this section shall:

(1) Notify the committee of the intent to ship melons under paragraph (e) of this section by applying on forms furnished by the committee for a Certificate of Privilege applicable to such special purpose shipments.

(2) Obtain an approved Certificate of Privilege.

(3) Prepare on forms furnished by the committee a special purpose shipment report for each individual shipment.

(4) Forward copies of the special purpose shipment report to the committee office and to the receiver with instructions to the receiver to sign and return a copy to the committee's office. Failure of the handler or receiver to report such shipments by promptly signing and returning the applicable special purpose shipment report to the committee office shall be cause for suspension of such handler's Certificate of Privilege applicable to such shipments.

(g) *Definitions.* *U.S. melon standards* mean the United States Standards for Grades of Cantaloupes (7 CFR 2851.475 through 2851.494c), or the United States Standards for Grades of Honey Dew and Honey Ball Type Melons (7 CFR 2851.3740 through 2851.3749), whichever is applicable, or variations thereof specified in this section. The term *U.S. Commercial* shall have the same meaning as set forth in these standards. All other terms used in this section shall have the same meaning as when used in Marketing Agreement No. 156 and this part.

[47 FR 13118, Mar. 29, 1982, as amended at 47 FR 24110, June 3, 1982; 48 FR 21881, May 16, 1983; 49 FR 15542, Apr. 19, 1984; 50 FR 10207, Mar. 14, 1985; 51 FR 16004, Apr. 30, 1986; 52 FR 17390, May 8, 1987; 53 FR 4958, Feb. 19, 1988; 54 FR 13507, Apr. 4, 1989; 55 FR 19721, May 11, 1990; 59 FR 13432, Mar. 22, 1994; 61 FR 7409, Feb. 28, 1996; 64 FR 23759, May 4, 1999]

EDITORIAL NOTE: After January 1, 1979, "Budget of Expenses and Rate of Assessment" regulations (e.g., sections .200 through .299) and "Handling" regulations (e.g., sections .300 through .399) which are in effect for a year or less, will not be carried in the Code of Federal Regulations. For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting these regulations, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and on GPO Access.

## PART 980—VEGETABLES; IMPORT REGULATIONS

Sec.

980.1 Import regulations; Irish potatoes.

980.117 Import regulations; onions.

980.212 Import regulations; tomatoes.

980.501 Safeguard procedures for potatoes, onions, and tomatoes exempt from grade, size, quality, and maturity requirements.

AUTHORITY: 7 U.S.C. 601-674.

### §980.1 Import regulations; Irish potatoes.

(a) *Findings and determinations with respect to imports of Irish potatoes.* (1) Pursuant to section 8e of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), it is hereby found that:

(i) Grade, size, quality, and maturity regulations have been issued from time to time pursuant to the following marketing orders: No. 945 (part 945 of this chapter), No. 948 (part 948 of this chapter), No. 947 (part 947 of this chapter), No. 946 (part 946 of this chapter), and No. 953 (part 953 of this chapter).

(ii) During the past several years, grade, size, quality, and maturity regulations have been in effect pursuant to two or more of such orders during each month of the year;

(iii) The marketing of Irish potatoes can be reasonably distinguished by the several seasonal categories, i.e., winter, early spring, late spring, early summer, late summer, and fall. The bulk of the fall crop is harvested and placed in storage in the fall and marketed over a period of several months extending into the following summer. But potatoes harvested from the other seasonal crops are generally marketed as the potatoes are harvested. The marketing seasons for these crops overlap.