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Subpart A—General

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§ 3.1 Purpose and scope.

(a) *In general.* (1) The regulations in this part prescribe standards and procedures for use by USDA agencies in the collection, compromise, suspension, or termination of debts owed to the United States.

(2) The regulations in this part apply to all debts of the United States subject to collection by USDA agencies, except as otherwise specified in this part or by statute.

(3) The regulations in this part do not preclude the Secretary from collection, compromise, suspension, or termination of debts as otherwise authorized by law. In such cases the laws and

implementing regulations that are specifically applicable to claims collection activities of a particular agency generally shall take precedence over this part.

(b) *Agency specific regulations.* (1) The regulations of this part shall apply to the Commodity Credit Corporation to the extent specified in 7 CFR part 1403.

(2) USDA agencies may issue regulations to supplement this part in order to meet the specific requirements of individual programs.

(c) *Inapplicability.* The regulations of this part shall not apply to:

(1) Collection of debts owed government travel card contractors by USDA employees;

(2) Collection of debts owed by individual Food Stamp Program recipients for whom debt collection procedures are provided under 7 CFR 273.18.

§ 3.2 Authority.

The regulations in this part are issued under the Debt Collection Act of 1982, as amended by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (DCIA) (31 U.S.C. 3701 et seq.) and the Federal Claims Collection Standards issued pursuant to the DCIA by Treasury and Justice (31 CFR parts 901-904) that prescribe government-wide standards for administrative collection, compromise, suspension, or termination of agency collection action, disclosure of debt information to credit reporting agencies, referral of claims to private collection contractors for resolution, and referral to Justice for litigation to collect debts owed the government. The regulations under this part also are issued under Treasury regulations implementing DCIA (31 CFR part 285) and related statutes and regulations governing the offset of Federal salaries (5 U.S.C. 5512 and 5514; 5 CFR part 550, subpart K) and administrative offset of tax refunds (31 U.S.C. 3720A).

§ 3.3 Definitions.

For the purpose of this part, except as where otherwise specifically provided, the term or terms:

Agency means a subagency, office, or corporation within USDA subject to the authority or general supervision of the Secretary.

Centralized administrative offset means referral of a debt to the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) for offset of payments made to a debtor by Federal agencies other than USDA.

Claim and *debt* are synonymous and interchangeable, and refer to an amount of money, funds, or property that has been determined by an agency official to be due the United States from any person, organization, or entity, except another Federal agency.

Commercial debt means a debt arising out of a business activity.

Consumer debt means a debt arising out of a personal activity.

Contracting officer has the same meaning as in 41 U.S.C. 601.

Credit reporting agencies (also known as *credit bureaus*) means major consumer credit reporting agencies that have signed agreements with agencies to receive and integrate credit information (data) from voluntary subscribers (Federal agencies and private sector entities) into their respective databases for the purpose of generating credit reports for sale to purchasers of credit data.

Creditor agency means a Federal agency or USDA agency to which a debtor owes a debt, including a debt collection center when acting on behalf of a creditor agency in matters pertaining to collection of the debt.

Day means calendar day unless otherwise specified.

Debt collection center means Treasury or other government agency or division, designated by the Secretary of the Treasury with authority to collect debt on behalf of creditor agencies in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3711(g).

Debtor means a person who owes a delinquent, nontax debt to the United States.

Delinquent means a debt that has not been paid by the date specified in the agency's initial written demand for payment or applicable agreement or instrument (including a post-delinquency payment agreement), unless other satisfactory payment arrangements have been made, or as otherwise defined by program specific statutes or regulations.

Federal agency means any other Department or entity within the Executive branch of the government.