

§ 955.44

pertaining to the committee's activities for which such person was responsible, and shall execute such assignments and other instruments as may be necessary or appropriate to vest in the committee full title to all of the property, funds, and 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 are not in effect and, upon determining such action is appropriate, the Secretary may direct that such person or persons shall act as trustee or trustees for the committee.

§ 955.44 Excess funds.

If, at the end of a fiscal period, the assessments collected are in excess of expenses incurred, such excess shall be accounted for as follows:

(a) The committee, with the approval of the Secretary, may establish an operating reserve and may carry over to subsequent fiscal periods excess funds in a reserve so established, except funds in the reserve shall not exceed the equivalent of approximately three fiscal periods' budgeted expenses. Such reserve funds may be used:

(1) To defray any expenses authorized under this part;

(2) To defray expenses during any fiscal period prior to the time assessment income is sufficient to cover such expenses;

(3) To cover deficits incurred during any fiscal period when assessment income is less than expenses;

(4) To defray expenses incurred during any period when any or all provisions of this part are suspended or are inoperative; and

(5) To cover necessary expenses of liquidation in the event of termination of this part.

Upon termination of this part, any funds not required to defray the necessary expenses of liquidation shall be disposed of in such manner as the Secretary may determine to be appropriate except that to the extent practicable, such funds shall be returned

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pro rata to the persons from whom such funds were collected.

(b) If such excess is not retained in a reserve as provided in paragraph (a) of this section, each handler entitled to a proportionate refund of the excess assessments collected shall be credited at the end of a fiscal period with such refund against the operations of the following fiscal period unless such handler demands payment thereof, in which event such proportionate refund shall be paid.

§ 955.45 Contributions.

The committee may accept voluntary contributions but these shall only be used to pay expenses incurred pursuant to § 955.50. Such contributions shall be free from any encumbrances by the donor, and the committee shall retain complete control of their use.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

§ 955.50 Research and development.

(a) The committee, with the approval of the Secretary, may establish or provide for the establishment of production research, marketing research and development and marketing promotion projects, including paid advertising, designed to assist, improve, or promote the marketing, distribution, consumption, or efficient production of Vidalia onions. Any such project for the promotion and advertising of Vidalia onions may utilize an identifying mark which shall be made available for use by all handlers in accordance with such terms and conditions as the committee, with the approval of the Secretary, may prescribe. The expense of such projects shall be paid from funds collected pursuant to § 955.42 or § 955.45.

(b) In recommending projects pursuant to this section, the committee shall give consideration to the following:

(1) The expected supply of Vidalia onions in relation to market requirements;

(2) The supply situation among competing areas and commodities;

(3) The anticipated benefits from such projects in relation to their costs;

(4) The need for marketing research with respect to any market development activity; and