

requirements specified in *Olive Regulation 1* (7 CFR 944.401). All canned ripe olives are required to be inspected and certified prior to importation (release from custody of the United States Custom Service), and all bulk olives for processing into canned ripe olives must be inspected and certified prior to canning. "Canned ripe olives" means olives in hermetically sealed containers and heat sterilized under pressure, of two distinct types, "ripe" and "green-ripe", as defined in the U.S. Standards for Grades of Canned Ripe Olives. The term does not include Spanish-style green olives.

Any lot of olives failing to meet the import requirements may be exported, disposed of, or shipped for exempt uses. Exportation or disposal of such olives would be accomplished under the supervision of the Processed Products Branch of the Fruit and Vegetable Division, with the costs of certifying the disposal of the olives borne by the importer. Exempt olives are those imported for processing into oil or donation to charity. Any person may also import up to 100 pounds (drained weight) of canned ripe olives or bulk olives exempt from these grade and size requirements.

This interim final rule modifies paragraph (b)(12) of the olive import regulation to authorize the importation of bulk olives which do not meet the minimum size requirements established for olives for whole and whole pitted uses to be used in the production of limited use styles during the 1995-96 crop year.

Permitting the use of smaller olives in the production of limited use styles will allow importers to better take advantage of the strong market for halved, segmented, sliced, and chopped canned ripe olives. Importers will be able to import and market more olives than would be permitted in the absence of this relaxation in size requirements. This additional opportunity is provided to maximize the use of the available olive supply and facilitate market expansion. In the absence of this rule, the smaller fruit could not be imported for limited uses, and would have to be disposed of through less profitable, non-canning uses under the supervision of the inspection service, exported, or utilized in exempt outlets.

Based on these considerations, the Administrator of the AMS has determined that this action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

In accordance with section 8e of the Act, the U.S. Trade Representative has concurred with the issuance of this interim final rule.

After consideration of all relevant material presented, including the committee's recommendation, and other available information, it is found that this interim final rule, as hereinafter set forth, will tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553, it is also found and determined upon good cause that it is impracticable, unnecessary, and contrary to the public interest to give preliminary notice prior to putting this rule into effect and that good cause exists for not postponing the effective date of this rule until 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register** because: (1) The 1995-96 crop year began August 1, 1995, and this rule needs to become effective as soon as possible to cover as much as the crop as possible; (2) this rule relaxes minimum size requirements; (3) California olive handlers are aware of this rule as it was discussed and unanimously recommended by the committee at a public meeting; and (4) this rule provides a 30-day comment period and any comments received will be considered prior to finalization of this rule.

List of Subjects

7 CFR Part 932

Marketing agreements, Olives, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

7 CFR Part 944

Avocados, Food grades and standards, Grapefruit, Grapes, Imports, Kiwifruit, Limes, Olives, Oranges.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble 7 CFR parts 932 and 944 are amended as follows:

1. The authority citation for 7 CFR parts 932 and 944 continues to read as follows:

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

PART 932—OLIVES GROWN IN CALIFORNIA

2. In §932.153, the section heading and paragraphs (a), (b) introductory text, and (b)(1) are revised to read as follows:

§ 932.153 Establishment of grade and size requirements for processed 1995-96 crop year olives for limited uses.

(a) *Grade.* On and after August 1, 1995, any handler may use processed olives of the respective variety group in the production of limited use styles of canned ripe olives if such olives were processed after July 31, 1995, and meet the grade requirements specified in §932.52(a)(1) as modified by §932.149.

(b) *Sizes.* On and after August 1, 1995, any handler may use processed olives in

the production of limited use styles of canned ripe olives if such olives were harvested during the period August 1, 1995, through July 31, 1996, and meet the following requirements:

(1) The processed olives shall be identified and kept separate and apart from any olives harvested before August 1, 1995, or after July 31, 1996.

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PART 944—FRUITS; IMPORT REGULATIONS

3. In §944.401, paragraph (b)(12) introductory text is revised to read as follows:

§ 944.401 Olive Regulation 1.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(12) Imported bulk olives when used in the production of canned ripe olives must be inspected and certified as prescribed in this section. Imported bulk olives which do not meet the applicable minimum size requirements specified in paragraphs (b)(2) through (b)(11) of this section may be imported during the period August 1, 1995, through July 31, 1996, for limited use, but any such olives so used shall not be smaller than the following applicable minimum size:

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Dated: August 11, 1995.

Terry C. Long,

Acting Deputy Director, Fruit and Vegetable Division.

[FR Doc. 95-20355 Filed 8-16-95; 8:45 am]

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7 CFR Part 959

[Docket No. FV95-959-2IFR]

Onions Grown in South Texas; Expenses

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Interim final rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: This interim final rule authorizes expenditures under Marketing Order No. 959 for the 1995-96 fiscal period. Authorization of this budget enables the South Texas Onion Committee (Committee) to incur expenses that are reasonable and necessary to administer the program. Funds to administer this program are derived from assessments on handlers.

DATES: Effective beginning August 1, 1995, through July 31, 1996. Comments received by September 18, 1995, will be considered prior to issuance of a final rule.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this action. Comments must be sent in triplicate to the Docket Clerk, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, room 2523-S, Washington, DC 20090-6456, FAX 202-720-5698. Comments should reference the docket number and the date and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register** and will be available for public inspection in the Office of the Docket Clerk during regular business hours.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Martha Sue Clark, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, room 2523-S, Washington, DC 20090-6456, telephone 202-720-9918, or Belinda G. Garza, McAllen Marketing Field Office, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, 1313 East Hackberry, McAllen, Texas 78501, telephone 210-682-2833.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule is issued under Marketing Agreement No. 143 and Order No. 959, both as amended (7 CFR part 959), regulating the handling of onions grown in South Texas. The marketing agreement and order are effective under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), hereinafter referred to as the Act.

The Department of Agriculture (Department) is issuing this rule in conformance with Executive Order 12866.

This interim final rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12778, Civil Justice Reform. This action authorizes expenditures for the 1995-96 fiscal period, which began August 1, 1995, and ends July 31, 1996. This interim final rule will not preempt any State or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule.

The Act provides that administrative proceedings must be exhausted before parties may file suit in court. Under section 608c(15)(A) of the Act, any handler subject to an order may file with the Secretary a petition stating that the order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with law and request a modification of the order or to be exempted therefrom. Such handler is afforded the opportunity for a hearing on the petition. After the hearing the Secretary would rule on the petition. The Act provides that the district court of the United States in any district in which the handler is an inhabitant, or has his or her principal place of business, has jurisdiction in equity to review the Secretary's ruling

on the petition, provided a bill in equity is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

Pursuant to the requirements set forth in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has considered the economic impact of this rule on small entities.

The purpose of the RFA is to fit regulatory actions to the scale of business subject to such actions in order that small businesses will not be unduly or disproportionately burdened. Marketing orders issued pursuant to the Act, and the rules issued thereunder, are unique in that they are brought about through group action of essentially small entities acting on their own behalf. Thus, both statutes have small entity orientation and compatibility.

There are approximately 70 producers of South Texas onions under this marketing order, and approximately 35 handlers. Small agricultural producers have been defined by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.601) as those having annual receipts of less than \$500,000, and small agricultural service firms are defined as those whose annual receipts are less than \$5,000,000. The majority of South Texas onion producers and handlers may be classified as small entities.

The budget of expenses for the 1995-96 fiscal period was prepared by the South Texas Onion Committee, the agency responsible for local administration of the marketing order, and submitted to the Department for approval. The members of the Committee are producers and handlers of South Texas onions. They are familiar with the Committee's needs and with the costs of goods and services in their local area and are thus in a position to formulate an appropriate budget.

The Committee, in a mail vote, unanimously recommended a 1995-96 budget of \$239,250 for personnel, office, and compliance expenses, which is \$21,450 more than the previous year. Budget items for 1995-96 which have increased compared to those budgeted for 1994-95 (in parentheses) are: Manager's salary, \$19,094 (\$15,172), office salaries, \$24,000 (\$22,600), payroll taxes, \$4,000 (\$3,100), insurance, \$7,000 (\$6,250), rent and utilities, \$6,500 (\$5,000), supplies, \$2,000 (\$1,500), postage, \$1,500 (\$1,000), telephone and telegraph, \$4,000 (\$2,500), furniture and fixtures, \$2,000 (\$1,000), equipment rental and maintenance, \$3,500 (\$2,500), contingencies, \$6,706 (\$3,978), manager's travel, \$5,000 (\$3,000), and \$3,750 for deferred compensation (manager's retirement), which was not a

line item expense last year. All other items are budgeted at last year's amounts.

The assessment rate and funding for the research and promotion projects will be recommended at the Committee's organizational meeting this fall. These funds, along with the administrative expenses for personnel, office, and compliance, will comprise the total budget. Funds in the reserve as of June 30, 1995, estimated at \$607,767, were within the maximum permitted by the order of two fiscal periods' expenses. These funds will be adequate to cover any expenses incurred by the Committee prior to the approval of the assessment rate.

Since no assessment rate is being recommended at this time, no additional costs will be imposed on handlers. Therefore, the Administrator of the AMS has determined that this action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

After consideration of all relevant matter presented, including the information and recommendations submitted by the Committee and other available information, it is hereby found that this rule, as hereinafter set forth, will tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553, it is also found and determined upon good cause that it is impracticable, unnecessary, and contrary to the public interest to give preliminary notice prior to putting this rule into effect and that good cause exists for not postponing the effective date of this action until 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register** because: (1) The fiscal period began on August 1, 1995, and the Committee needs to have approval to pay its expenses which are incurred on a continuous basis; (2) this action is similar to that taken at the beginning of the 1994-95 fiscal period; and (3) this interim final rule provides a 30-day comment period, and all comments timely received will be considered prior to finalization of this action.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 959

Marketing agreements, Onions, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR part 959 is amended as follows:

PART 959—ONIONS GROWN IN SOUTH TEXAS

1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 959 continues to read as follows:

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

2. A new § 959.236 is added to read as follows:

Note: This section will not appear in the Code of Federal Regulations.

§ 959.236 Expenses.

Expenses of \$239,250 by the South Texas Onion Committee are authorized for the fiscal period ending July 31, 1996. Unexpended funds may be carried over as a reserve.

Dated: August 11, 1995.

Terry C. Long,

Acting Deputy Director, Fruit and Vegetable Division.

[FR Doc. 95-20356 Filed 8-16-95; 8:45 am]

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7 CFR Part 981

[Docket No. FV95-981-1FIR]

Almonds Grown in California; Expenses and Assessment Rate

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture (Department) is adopting as a final rule, without change, the provisions of an interim final rule authorizing expenditures and establishing an assessment rate under Marketing Order No. 981 for the 1995-96 crop year. Authorization of this budget enables the Almond Board of California (Board) to incur expenses that are reasonable and necessary to administer the program. Funds to administer this program are derived from assessments on handlers.

DATES: Effective beginning July 1, 1995, through June 30, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Kate Nelson, Marketing Assistant, California Marketing Field Office, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, 2202 Monterey Street, suite 102B, Fresno, California 93721, telephone (209) 487-5901 or FAX # (209) 487-5906; or Kathleen M. Finn, Marketing Specialist, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, room 2522-S, Washington, DC 20090-6456, telephone (202) 720-1509 or FAX # (202) 720-5698.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This final rule is issued under Marketing Agreement and Order No. 981 (7 CFR part 981), both as amended, hereinafter referred to as the "order," regulating the handling of almonds grown in California. The marketing agreement and order are effective under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act

of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), hereinafter referred to as the "Act."

The Department of Agriculture (Department) is issuing this rule in conformance with Executive Order 12866.

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12778, Civil Justice Reform. Under the provisions of the marketing order now in effect, California almonds are subject to assessments. It is intended that the assessment rate as issued herein will be applicable to all assessable almonds handled during the 1995-96 crop year, which began July 1, 1995, and ends June 30, 1996. This rule will not preempt any State or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule.

The Act provides that administrative proceedings must be exhausted before parties may file suit in court. Under section 608c(15)(A), any handler subject to an order may file with the Secretary a petition stating that the order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with law and request a modification of the order or to be exempted therefrom. Such handler is afforded the opportunity for a hearing on the petition. After the hearing the Secretary would rule on the petition. The Act provides that the district court of the United States in any district in which the handler is an inhabitant, or has his or her principal place of business, has jurisdiction in equity to review the Secretary's ruling on the petition, provided a bill in equity is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

Pursuant to the requirements set forth in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has considered the economic impact of this rule on small entities.

The purpose of the RFA is to fit regulatory actions to the scale of business subject to such actions in order that small businesses will not be unduly or disproportionately burdened. Marketing orders issued pursuant to the Act, and the rules issued thereunder, are unique in that they are brought about through group action of essentially small entities acting on their own behalf. Thus, both statutes have small entity orientation and compatibility.

There are approximately 7,000 producers of California almonds under this marketing order, and approximately 115 handlers. Small agricultural producers have been defined by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.601) as those having annual receipts of less than \$500,000, and small

agricultural service firms are defined as those whose annual receipts are less than \$5,000,000. The majority of California almond producers and handlers may be classified as small entities.

The budget of expenses and rate of assessment for the 1995-96 crop year was prepared by the Board, the agency responsible for local administration of the marketing order, and submitted to the Department for approval. The members of the Board are producers and handlers of California almonds. They are familiar with the Board's needs and with the costs of goods and services in their local area and are thus in a position to formulate an appropriate budget. The budget was formulated and discussed in a public meeting. Thus, all directly affected persons have had an opportunity to participate and provide input.

The assessment rate recommended by the Board was derived by dividing anticipated expenses by expected receipts of California almonds. The Board also considered carryin and reserve funds from the prior year as well as desired carryout funds at the end of the 1995-96 crop year. Because that rate will be applied to handlers' actual receipts, a rate must be established that will provide sufficient income to pay the Board's budgeted expenses.

The Board met on May 12, 1995, and unanimously recommended a 1995-96 budget of \$4,952,591, as compared to the \$5,235,262 ultimately budgeted for the previous year. For the 1994-95 year, the Board initially recommended, and the Department approved, expenditures totalling \$9,435,262. Of that total amount, \$6.575 million was budgeted for promotional activities and \$300,000 was intended to be added to the Board's monetary reserve. The assessment rate for the 1994-95 crop year was initially set at 2.25 cents per kernel pound of almonds. However, because of uncertainty created by legal decisions regarding the Board's former advertising and promotion program, the Board ultimately postponed certain advertising activities and recommended reducing its assessment rate on handlers to .25 cents per pound. As approved by the Department, budgeted expenditures for promotional activities were reduced to \$2.675 million and the Board curtailed its plans to add \$300,000 to its reserve.

For the 1995-96 year, the Board has budgeted \$2.358 million for a line item entitled information and research, with the bulk of these funds targeted for public relations, food service and industrial promotional programs, and research. In addition, the Board has budgeted \$150,000 for China and