

apply such regulation, the Committee recommended only one of the 9 raisin varietal types defined under the marketing order for volume control regulation this season.

As mentioned earlier, the Department's "Guidelines for Fruit, Vegetable, and Specialty Crop Marketing Orders" specify that 110 percent of recent years' sales should be made available to primary markets each season before recommendations for volume regulation are approved. The quantity available under this rule is 129 percent of the quantity shipped in 1995.

The free and reserve percentages established by the interim final rule released the full trade demand and apply uniformly to all handlers in the industry, regardless of size. There are no known additional costs incurred by small handlers that are not incurred by large handlers. The stabilizing effects of the percentages impact all handlers positively by helping them maintain and expand markets, despite seasonal supply fluctuations. Likewise, price stability positively impacts all producers by allowing them to better anticipate the revenues their raisins will generate.

While the level of benefits of this rulemaking are difficult to quantify, the stabilizing effects of the volume regulations impact both small and large handlers positively by helping them maintain markets even though raisin supplies fluctuate widely from season to season.

This rule will not impose any additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements on either small or large raisin handlers. As with all Federal marketing order programs, reports and forms are periodically reviewed to reduce information requirements and duplication by industry and public sectors. In addition, as noted in the initial regulatory flexibility analysis, the Department has not identified any relevant Federal rules that duplicate, overlap, or conflict with this rule.

An interim final rule concerning this action was issued by the Department on April 7, 1997, put on display at the Office of the Federal Register on April 11, 1997, and published in the **Federal Register** on April 14, 1997. Copies of the rule were mailed by the Committee's staff to all Committee members, raisin handlers, and dehydrators. Finally, the rule was made available through the Internet by the Office of the Federal Register. That rule provided for a 30-day comment period which ended May 14, 1997. No comments were received.

After consideration of all relevant material presented, including the Committee's recommendation, and

other information, it is found that finalizing the interim final rule, without change, as published in the **Federal Register** (62 FR 18029, April 14, 1997) will tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 989

Grapes, Marketing agreements, Raisins, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

PART 989—RAISINS PRODUCED FROM GRAPES GROWN IN CALIFORNIA

Accordingly, the interim final rule amending 7 CFR part 989 which was published at 62 FR 18029 on April 14, 1997, is adopted as a final rule without change.

Dated: June 6, 1997.

Eric M. Forman,

Acting Director, Fruit and Vegetable Division.
[FR Doc. 97-15669 Filed 6-13-97; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

7 CFR Part 1753

Acceptance Test Policy

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.
ACTION: Direct final rule.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is publishing a minor amendment to its test acceptance procedures to correct 7 CFR part 1753.39, paragraph (c), to reflect new acceptance tests guidelines covered under RUS Bulletin 1753E-201, Acceptance Tests for Digital, Stored Program Controlled Central Office Equipment.

DATES: This rule will become effective on August 15, 1997 unless we receive written adverse comments or notice of intent to submit adverse comments on or before July 16, 1997. Written comments must be received by RUS, or bear a postmark or equivalent, not later than July 16, 1997. If we receive such comment or notice, we will publish a timely notice in the **Federal Register** stating that the rule will not become effective until we have addressed the comments received and published a final rule. A second public comment period will not be held. Parties interested in commenting on this action should do so at this time.

ADDRESSES: Submit any adverse comments or notice of intent to submit adverse comments to Orren E. Cameron III, Director, Telecommunications Standards Division, Rural Utilities

Service, STOP 1598, United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1598. RUS requires, in hard copy, a signed original and three copies of all comments (7 CFR part 1700.30(e)). All comments received will be available for public inspection at Room 2835 (address as above) during regular business hours (7 CFR part 1.27(b)).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John J. Schell, Chief, Central Office Equipment Branch, Telecommunications Standards Division, Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture, STOP 1598, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1598, telephone number (202) 720-0671.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Executive Order 12866

This rule has been determined to be not significant for the purposes of Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review, and, therefore has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Regulatory Flexibility Act Certification

The Administrator of RUS has determined that this rule is not a rule as defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). Therefore, the Regulatory Flexibility Act does not apply to, this action.

National Environmental Policy Act Certification

The Administrator of RUS has determined that this rule will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment as defined by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*). Therefore, this action does not require an environmental impact statement or assessment.

Executive Order 12372

This rule is excluded from the scope of Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Consultation, which may require a consultation with State and local officials. A Notice of Final Rule titled Department Programs and Activities Excluded from Executive Order 12372 (50 FR 47034) exempts RUS telephone loans and loan guarantees from coverage under this Order.

Executive Order 12988

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. RUS has determined that this rule meets the applicable standards provided in Sec. 3. of the Executive Order.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

The program described by this rule is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Programs under No. 10.851, Rural Telephone Loans and Loan Guarantees. This catalog is available on a subscription basis from the Superintendent of Documents, the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325.

Information Collection and Recordkeeping Requirements

The reporting and recordkeeping burdens contained in this rule were approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 35, as amended) under control number 0572-0032.

Background

This action is a minor amendment to add the current bulletin number for acceptance testing guidelines and remove information that is no longer valid.

Need for Correction

As published, the final regulation contains errors which may prove to be misleading and are in need of clarification. As this amendment does not impose additional burden or requirements on the public, this is being published as direct final rulemaking. However, RUS would be pleased to receive comments from interested parties.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 1753

Communications equipment, Loan programs—communications, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Rural areas, Telephone.

Accordingly, 7 CFR part 1753 is amended as follows:

PART 1753—TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS CONSTRUCTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. The authority citation for part 1753 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*; 7 U.S.C. 1921 *et seq.*; Pub. L. 103-354, 108 Stat. 3178 (7 U.S.C. 6941 *et seq.*).

2. Section 1753.39(c) is revised to read as follows:

§ 1753.39 Closeout documents.

* * * * *

(c) *Acceptance tests.* The borrower will perform acceptance tests as part of the partial closeout and final closeout of RUS Contract Form 525. Tests that will demonstrate compliance with the requirements of 7 CFR 1755.522 are contained in RUS Bulletin 1753E-201.

Other tests demonstrating compliance will be acceptable. RUS Bulletin 1753E-201 is available from RUS, Program Support and Regulatory Analysis, STOP 1522, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-1522.

* * * * *

Dated: June 9, 1997.
Jill Long Thompson,
Under Secretary, Rural Development.
 [FR Doc. 97-15755 Filed 6-13-97; 8:45 am]
 BILLING CODE 3410-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

7 CFR Part 1786

RIN 0572-AB27

RUS Privatization Demonstration Prepayment Program for the State of Alaska

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.
ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The 1996 Farm Bill, signed into law on April 4, 1996, repealed Section 311 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936. Section 311 provided the legal authority for a privatization demonstration program for the State of Alaska. Under that demonstration program, electric and telecommunications borrowers in the state of Alaska could prepay certain RUS loans on favorable terms. Borrowers who prepaid under this demonstration program became ineligible for most types of loans from RUS after the prepayment. Because the Farm Bill repealed the statutory authority, regulations implementing this program have become obsolete. Today's rule removes these obsolete regulations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This rule is effective June 16, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sue Arnold, Financial Analyst, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service, Room 2230-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Stop 1522, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: 202-720-0736. FAX: 202-720-4120. E-mail: sarnold@rus.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is taking this regulatory action as part of an ongoing project to eliminate unnecessary regulations and improve those that remain in force. This regulatory action has been determined not to be significant for the purposes of Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review, and, therefore has not been

reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

The program described by this rule is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Programs under numbers 10.850, Rural Electrification Loans and Loan Guarantees, 10.851 Rural Telephone Loans and Loan Guarantees, and 10.852, Rural Telephone Bank Loans. This catalog is available on a subscription basis from the Superintendent of Documents, the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325.

Information Collection and Recordkeeping Requirements

This rule contains no information collection or recordkeeping requirements.

Background

On October 30, 1986, an Act Making Continuing Appropriations for Fiscal Year of 1987 and For Other Purposes (Pub.L. 99-591, 100 Stat. 3341-333) added a new section 311 (7 U.S.C. 940a) to the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, as amended (7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*), (RE Act). Section 311 established a privatization demonstration program that allowed electric and telecommunications borrowers in the State of Alaska to prepay, under favorable terms, certain loans made or guaranteed by the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), the predecessor to RUS. Borrowers who prepaid under this demonstration program were required to prepay all outstanding loans made or guaranteed under the RE Act, and, with a few exceptions, such borrowers are ineligible for future loans or loan guarantees under the RE Act.

RUS rules implementing the Privatization Demonstration Program for the State of Alaska were issued in 7 CFR 1786 subpart D.

On April 4, 1996, Section 780 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act (Pub.L. 104-127) repealed Section 311. Since RUS no longer has the statutory authority for the Privatization Demonstration Program for the State of Alaska, today's rule removes the now obsolete 7 CFR 1786 subpart D. Prepayment provisions established elsewhere in 7 CFR part 1786, and in other RUS regulations are not affected by today's amendment.

Because statutory authority for the Privatization Demonstration Program for the State of Alaska has been repealed, no period of public comment is needed for this conforming amendment to RUS regulations.