Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

Edward R. Madigan United States Agricultural Export Excellence Board of Evaluators: Nominations

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, USDA.

ACTION: Edward R. Madigan United States Agricultural Export Excellence Board of Evaluators: Nominations.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that nominations are being sought for six (6) qualified persons to serve on the Edward R. Madigan United states Agricultural Export Excellence Board of Evaluators (Board). The role of the Board is to provide the Secretary of Agriculture with advice and recommendations for the selection of recipients of the Edward R. Madigan United States Agricultural Export Excellence Award.

DATES: Written nominations must be received by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) by 5 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time, April 12, 2004.

ADDRESSES: All nominating materials should be sent to Mr. James Warden, United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Room 4939S–Stop 1052, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250–1052. Forms may also be submitted by fax to (202) 690–0193.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Persons interested in serving on the Edward R. Madigan United States Agricultural Export Excellence Board of Evaluators, or in nominating individuals to serve, should contact Mr. James Warden, Foreign Agricultural Service, by telephone (202) 720–6343, by fax (202) 690–0193, or by electronic mail to *jim.warden@fas.usda.gov* and request Form AD–755 and Form SF–181. Form AD–755 is required and is available at the FAS home page: *http://www.fas.usda.gov/admin/ad755.pdf*. Form SF–181 is requested, but optional, and is available at *http://www.fas.usda.gov/admin/sf181.pdf*. Persons with disabilities who require an alternative means for communication of information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) shoudl contact USDA's Target Center at (202) 720–2600 (voice and TDD).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Board is authorized by section 261(h) of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. The overall purpose of the Board is to provide the Secretary of Agriculture with advice and recommendations for the selection of recipients of the Edward R. Madigan United States Agricultural Export Excellence Award. The Board is composed of six (6) representatives from the private sector selected for their knowledge and experience in exporting U.S. agricultural products. More information about the purpose and function of the Board and can be found at: *http://www.fas.usda.gov/info/madigan/madigan.html*.

The members of the Board are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture and serve at the discretion of the Secretary. Board members serve at their own expense; they are not compensated for their services and do not receive per diem or travel funds. Three (3) members will be selected for 2-year term maximums and three (3) others for 3-year term maximums. The Secretary may renew an appointment for one or more additional terms. The Board shall meet as often as the Secretary of Agriculture deems necessary either in person or via teleconference to review nominations and make recommendations.

Nominations are open to all individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical handicap, marital status, or sexual orientation. To ensure that the work of the Board takes into account the needs of the diverse groups served by USDA, membership shall include, to the extent practicable, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent the interest of minorities, women and persons with disabilities.

Members are selected primarily for their knowledge and experience in exporting U.S. agricultural products. No person, company, producer, farm organization, trade association or other entity has a right to representation on the Board. In making selections, every effort will be made to maintain balanced representation of the various broad industries within the United States as well as geographic diversity.

Dated: February 23, 2004.

A. Ellen Terpstra,

Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service.

[FR Doc. 04–5497 Filed 3–10–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–10–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

Notice of Funds Availability; Tree Assistance Program for Michigan Tree, Vine and Bush Losses Due to Fire Blight

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of $9,700,000 for the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) to provide assistance to orchardists who had tree, vine or bush losses in Michigan due to fire blight that occurred since January 1, 2000.

DATES: Applications will be accepted until March 25, 2004, or such other date as announced by the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs of the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Eloise Taylor, Chief, Compliance Branch, Production, Emergencies and Compliance Division, FSA/USDA, Stop 0517, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250–0517; telephone (202) 720–9882; e-mail: *Eloise_Taylor@wdc.usda.gov*. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of regulatory information, (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc. should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720–2600 (voice and TDD).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

TAP was authorized but not funded by section 10201 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107–171) (7 U.S.C. 8201) to provide assistance to eligible orchardists to replant trees, bushes and vines that were grown for the production of an annual crop and were lost due to a natural disaster. This notice sets out a

special program within TAP for certain fire blight losses in Michigan. Fire blight is a destructive bacterial disease of trees caused by *Erwinia Amylovora* that attacks succulent tissues of blossoms, shoots, water sprouts and root suckers, and produces an infection that may extend into scaffold limbs, trunks or root systems, and may kill the tree. Section 3602 of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2003 (Pub. L. 108–83) provides that the Secretary of Agriculture shall use $9,700,000 of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, to remain available until expended, to provide assistance under TAP to compensate eligible orchardists for tree losses incurred since January 1, 2000, due to fire blight in the State of Michigan. Assistance will be subject to regulations and restrictions governing the new TAP provided in the 2002 Act. Those regulations were published March 2, 2004 (69 FR 69 FR 9744) and are found at 7 CFR part 783. Also, the restrictions of the statute apply. Those include a requirement of replanting, a limitation on payments by ''person'', a limitation on acres for which relief can be claimed, a requirement that the loss be tied to a natural disaster, and others. If after the claims filed during the allowed period set out in this notice are received, the available funds are less than the eligible claims a proration will be made. Claims are limited to 75 per cent of the cost of replanting on eligible acres and are subject to claims per person of $75,000 and a limit on a claim to costs on no more than 500 acres. If monies are, by contract, left over, additional sign ups or claims may be entertained as announced by the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs of the FSA on behalf of FSA and CCC. The Deputy Administrator may waive or amend deadlines to the extent not prohibited by the statute. Statutory TAP provisions dealing with the availability of seedlings do not apply here because no seedlings are available and the fire blight provisions specifically call for the use of CCC funds. All claims are subject to the availability of funds.

Applications

Applications will be accepted until March 25, 2004, or such other date as announced by the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs of FSA.

Application forms are available for TAP at FSA county offices or on the Internet at *http://www.fsa.usda.gov*. A complete application for TAP benefits and related supporting documentation must be submitted to the county office before the deadline.

A complete application will include all of the following:

(1) A form provided by FSA;

(2) A written estimate of the number of trees, bushes or vines lost or damaged which is prepared by the owner or someone who is a qualified expert, as determined by the FSA county committee;

(3) The number of acres on which the loss was suffered;

(4) Sufficient evidence of the loss to allow the county committee to calculate whether an eligible loss occurred; and

(5) Other information as requested or required by regulation.

Signed at Washington, DC March 2, 2004.

James R. Little,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

[FR Doc. 04–5494 Filed 3–10–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–05–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

Public Meetings of Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. II, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) is issuing this notice to advise the public that meetings of the Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (Committee) will be held to discuss various beginning farmer issues.

DATES: The public meetings will be held March 24–25, 2004. The first meeting, on March 24, 2004, will start at 8:30 a.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST) and end at 5:30 p.m. EST. The second meeting, on March 25, 2004, will begin at 8 a.m. EST and end by 4 p.m. EST.

ADDRESSES: All meetings will be held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, 1000 H Street, Washington, DC, telephone (202) 582–1234. Written requests to make oral presentations must be sent to: Mark Falcone, Designated Federal Official for the Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, Farm Service Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0522, Washington, DC 20250–0522; telephone (202) 720–1632; FAX (202) 690–1117; e-mail: *mark.falcone@usda.gov.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark Falcone at (202) 720–1632.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 5 of the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992 (Pub. L. 102–554) required the Secretary of Agriculture (the Secretary) to establish the Committee for the purpose of advising the Secretary on the following:

(1) The development of a program of coordinated financial assistance to qualified beginning farmers and ranchers required by section 309(i) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1929). Under the program, Federal and State beginning farmer programs provide financial assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers;

(2) Methods of maximizing the number of new farming and ranching opportunities created through the program;

(3) Methods of encouraging States to participate in the program;

(4) The administration of the program; and

(5) Other methods of creating new farming or ranching opportunities.

The Committee meets at least once a year and all meetings are open to the public. The duration of the Committee is indefinite. Earlier meetings of the Committee, beginning in 1999, provided an opportunity for members to exchange ideas on ways to increase opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers. Members discussed various issues and drafted numerous recommendations, which were provided to the Secretary.

Agenda items for the March, 2004 meetings include:

(1) The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, which was authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107–171) (2002 Farm Bill), but has not been funded, and the Extension Risk Management Education Program (both programs under the jurisdiction of USDA's Cooperative, State, Research, Education and Extension Service);

(2) Risk Management Education and Outreach Programs, along with crop insurance issues concerning participating insurance companies (under the jurisdiction of USDA's Risk Management Agency);

(3) Various beginning farmer and rancher conservation issues authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill (under the jurisdiction of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service);

(4) FSA's beginning farmer programs, borrower training program, and streamlining of forms and regulations; and

(5) The Kellogg Foundation's involvement in providing assistance to new immigrant and refugee farmers.

Attendance is open to all interested persons but limited to space available. Anyone wishing to make an oral statement should submit a request in