

conducting a lottery or pool, in a game for money or property, or in selling or purchasing a numbers slip or ticket. However, this section does not preclude activities:

(a) Necessitated by an employee's law enforcement duties; or

(b) Under section 7 of Executive Order 12353 (47 FR 12785, 3 CFR, 1982 Comp., p. 139) and similar TVA-approved activities.

§ 1300.103 General conduct prejudicial to TVA.

An employee shall not engage in criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral, or notoriously disgraceful conduct, or other conduct prejudicial to TVA.

§ 1300.104 Sexual harassment.

It is TVA policy that all TVA employees are responsible for assuring that the workplace is free from sexual harassment. Accordingly, all employees must avoid any action or conduct which could be viewed as sexual harassment including:

(a) Unwelcome sexual advances;
(b) Requests for sexual favors; and
(c) Other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

(1) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;

(2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or

(3) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

§ 1300.105 National origin harassment.

It is TVA policy that all TVA employees are responsible for assuring that the workplace is free from national origin harassment. Accordingly, all employees must avoid any action or conduct which could be viewed as national origin harassment, including ethnic slurs and other verbal or physical conduct relating to an individual's national origin when such conduct:

(a) Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment;

(b) Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or

(c) Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

§ 1300.106 Harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, age, or disability.

It is TVA policy that all TVA employees are responsible for assuring that the workplace is free from

harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, age, or disability. Accordingly, all employees must avoid any action or conduct which could be viewed as harassment on these bases, including any verbal or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, age, or disability when such conduct:

(a) Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment;

(b) Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or

(c) Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

§ 1300.107 Financial interest exemptions.

In accordance with the provisions of 18 U.S.C. 208(b)(2), TVA has exempted the following financial interests of its employees from the requirements of 18 U.S.C. 208(a) upon the ground that such interests are too remote or too inconsequential to affect the integrity of such employees' services. When any of the following exemptions applies only to a limited range of official actions, rather than all official acts, the range of actions will be specified within the language of the exemption.

(a) An investment in a business enterprise in the form of ownership of bonds, notes, and other evidences of indebtedness which are not convertible into shares of preferred or common stock and have no warrants attached entitling the holder to purchase stock provided that the estimated market value of the interest does not exceed \$5,000;

(b) An investment in the form of shares in the ownership of enterprises, including preferred and common stocks whether voting or nonvoting, or warrants to purchase such shares, or evidences of indebtedness convertible into such shares provided that the estimated market value of the interest does not exceed \$5,000 and does not exceed 1 percent of the estimated market value of all the outstanding shares of the enterprise;

(c) Shares or investments in a well-diversified money market or mutual fund;

(d) Vested interests in a pension fund arising out of former employment and to which no further contributions are being made in the employee's behalf, provided that, if the pension plan is a defined benefit plan, the assets of the plan are diversified. For the purpose of this provision, payments are not considered to be made "in the employee's behalf" if they are made solely to maintain adequate plan funding rather than to provide specific benefits for the employee; or

(e) The interest an employee has by virtue of his or her personal or family use of electric power or through his or her interests in an organization using electric power generated or distributed by TVA, for purposes of his or her official actions at TVA in the process of developing or approving TVA power rate schedules.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 946

[Docket No. FV96-946-2IFR]

Irish Potatoes Grown in Washington; Assessment Rate

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Interim final rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: This interim final rule establishes an assessment rate for the State of Washington Potato Committee (Committee) under Marketing Order No. 946 for the 1996-97 and subsequent fiscal periods. The Committee is responsible for local administration of the marketing order which regulates the handling of Irish potatoes grown in Washington. Authorization to assess potato handlers enables the Committee to incur expenses that are reasonable and necessary to administer the program.

DATES: Effective on July 1, 1996. Comments received by June 5, 1996, will be considered prior to issuance of a final rule.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this rule. 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, FAX 202-720-5698, or Dennis L. West, Northwest Marketing Field Office, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS,

USDA, Green-Wyatt Federal Building, room 369, 1220 Southwest Third Avenue, Portland, OR 97204, telephone 503-326-2724, FAX 503-326-7440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule is issued under Marketing Agreement No. 113 and Order No. 946, both as amended (7 CFR part 946) regulating the handling of Irish potatoes grown in Washington, hereinafter referred to as the "order." The order is 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 marketing order now in effect, Washington potato handlers are subject to assessments. Funds to administer the order are derived from such assessments. It is intended that the assessment rate as issued herein will be applicable to all assessable potatoes beginning July 1, 1996, and continuing until amended, suspended, or terminated. 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) 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 to review the Secretary's ruling on the petition, provided an action is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

Pursuant to requirements set forth in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), 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 450 producers of Washington potatoes in the production area and approximately 40 handlers subject to regulation under the marketing order. 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 Washington potato producers and handlers may be classified as small entities.

The Washington potato marketing order provides authority for the Committee, with the approval of the Department, to formulate an annual budget of expenses and collect assessments from handlers to administer the program. The members of the Committee are producers and handlers of Washington potatoes. They are familiar with the Committee's needs and with the costs for goods and services in their local area and are thus in a position to formulate an appropriate budget and assessment rate. The assessment rate is formulated and discussed in a public meeting. Thus, all directly affected persons have an opportunity to participate and provide input.

The Committee met on February 15, 1996, and unanimously recommended 1996-97 expenditures of \$42,500 and an assessment rate of \$0.003 per hundredweight of potatoes. In comparison, last year's budgeted expenditures were \$42,300. The assessment rate of \$0.003 is the same as last year's established rate. Major expenditures recommended by the Committee for the 1996-97 year include \$17,400 for an agreement with the Washington State Potato Commission to provide miscellaneous services to the Committee and \$6,000 for compliance audits, the same as the budgeted amounts for these items in 1995-96.

The assessment rate recommended by the Committee was derived by dividing anticipated expenses by expected shipments of Washington potatoes. Potato shipments for the year are estimated at 9,000,000 hundredweight which should provide \$27,000 in assessment income. Income derived from handler assessments, along with funds from the Committee's authorized reserve, will be adequate to cover budgeted expenses. Funds remaining in

the reserve at the end of the 1996-97 fiscal period should be about \$74,500. Funds in the reserve will be kept within the maximum permitted by the order.

While this rule will impose some additional costs on handlers, the costs are in the form of uniform assessments on all handlers. Some of the additional costs may be passed on to producers. However, these costs will be offset by the benefits derived by the operation of the marketing order. Therefore, the Agricultural Marketing Service has determined that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

The assessment rate established in this rule will continue in effect indefinitely unless modified, suspended, or terminated by the Secretary upon recommendation and information submitted by the Committee or other available information.

Although this assessment rate is effective for an indefinite period, the Committee will continue to meet prior to or during each fiscal period to recommend a budget of expenses and consider recommendations for modification of the assessment rate. The dates and times of Committee meetings are available from the Committee or the Department. Committee meetings are open to the public and interested persons may express their views at these meetings. The Department will evaluate Committee recommendations and other available information to determine whether modification of the assessment rate is needed. Further rulemaking will be undertaken as necessary. The Committee's 1996-97 budget and those for subsequent fiscal periods will be reviewed and, as appropriate, approved by the Department.

After consideration of all relevant material presented, including the information and recommendation 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, because: (1) The Committee needs to have sufficient funds to pay its expenses which are incurred on a continuous basis; (2) the 1996-97 fiscal period begins on July 1, 1996, and the marketing order requires that the rate of assessment for each fiscal period apply to all assessable potatoes handled during such fiscal period; (3) handlers are aware of this

action which was unanimously recommended by the Committee at a public meeting and is similar to other assessment rate actions issued in past years; and (4) this interim final rule provides a 30-day comment period, and all comments timely received will be considered prior to finalization of this rule.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 946

Marketing agreements, Potatoes, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR part 946 is amended as follows:

PART 946—IRISH POTATOES GROWN IN WASHINGTON

1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 946 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

2. A new § 946.248 is added to read as follows:

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

§ 946.248 Assessment rate.

On and after July 1, 1996, an assessment rate of \$0.003 per hundredweight is established for Washington potatoes.

Dated: April 30, 1996.

Robert C. Keeney,

Director, Fruit and Vegetable Division.

[FR Doc. 96–11151 Filed 5–3–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

7 CFR Part 956

[Docket No. FV96–956–2IFR]

Sweet Onions Grown in the Walla Walla Valley of Southeast Washington and Northeast Oregon; Assessment Rate

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Interim final rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: This interim final rule establishes an assessment rate for the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Committee (Committee) under Marketing Order No. 956 for the 1996–97 and subsequent fiscal periods. The Committee is responsible for local administration of the marketing order which regulates the handling of Sweet Onions grown in the Walla Walla Valley of Southeast Washington and Northeast Oregon. Authorization to assess onion handlers enables the Committee to incur expenses that are reasonable and necessary to administer the program.

DATES: Effective on June 1, 1996.

Comments received by June 5, 1996, will be considered prior to issuance of a final rule.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this rule. 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, FAX 202–720–5698, or Robert J. Curry, Northwest Marketing Field Office, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Green-Wyatt Federal Building, room 369, 1220 Southwest Third Avenue, Portland, OR 97204, telephone 503–326–2724, FAX 503–326–7440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule is issued under Marketing Agreement and Order No. 956 (7 CFR part 956) regulating the handling of Sweet Onions grown in the Walla Walla Valley of Southeast Washington and Northeast Oregon, hereinafter referred to as the “order.” The order is 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 marketing order now in effect, Walla Walla Sweet Onion handlers are subject to assessments. Funds to administer the order are derived from such assessments. It is intended that the assessment rate as issued herein will be applicable to all assessable onions beginning June 1, 1996, and continuing until amended, suspended, or terminated. 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) 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 to review the Secretary's ruling on the petition, provided an action is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

Pursuant to requirements set forth in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), 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 50 producers of Walla Walla Sweet Onions in the production area and approximately 30 handlers subject to regulation under the marketing order. 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 Walla Walla Sweet Onion producers and handlers may be classified as small entities.

The Walla Walla Sweet Onion marketing order provides authority for the Committee, with the approval of the Department, to formulate an annual budget of expenses and collect assessments from handlers to administer the program. The members of the Committee are producers and handlers of Walla Walla Sweet Onions. They are familiar with the Committee's needs and with the costs for goods and services in their local area and are thus in a position to formulate an appropriate budget and assessment rate. The assessment rate is formulated and discussed in a public meeting. Thus, all directly affected persons have an opportunity to participate and provide input.