

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

Agricultural Marketing Service

[No. LS-96-003]

Beef Promotion and Research: Certification and Nomination; Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is accepting applications from State cattle producer and general farm organizations as well as beef importers who desire to be certified to nominate producers or importers for appointment to vacant positions on the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board (Board). Organizations which have not previously been certified that are interested in submitting nominations must complete and submit an official application form to AMS. Previously certified organizations do not need to reapply. Notice is also given that vacancies will occur on the Board and that during a period to be established, nominations will be accepted from eligible organizations and individual importers.

DATES: Applications for certification must be received by close of business May 6, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Certification forms as well as copies of the certification and nomination procedures may be requested from Ralph L. Tapp, Chief, Marketing Programs Branch; Livestock and Seed Division; AMS, USDA; Room 2606-S; P.O. Box 96456; Washington, DC 20090-6456.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ralph L. Tapp, Chief, Marketing Programs Branch at 202/720-1115.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985 (Act) (7 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.), enacted December 23, 1985, authorizes the implementation of a Beef Promotion and Research Order (Order). The Order, as published in the July 18, 1986, Federal Register (51 FR 26132), provides for the establishment of a Board. The current Board consists of 101 cattle producers and 6 importers appointed by the Secretary. Due to reapportionment, the 1997 Board will consist of 104 producers and 7 importers. The duties and responsibilities of the Board are specified in the Order.

The Act and the Order provide that the Secretary shall either certify or otherwise determine the eligibility of State or importer organizations or associations to nominate members to the Board to ensure that nominees represent the interests of cattle producers and importers. Nominations for importer representatives may also be made by individuals who import cattle, beef, or beef products. Individual importers do not need to be certified as eligible to submit nominations. When individual importers submit nominations, they must establish to the satisfaction of the Secretary that they are in fact importers of cattle, beef, or beef products, pursuant to § 1260.143(b)(2) of the Order [7 CFR 1260.143(b)(2)]. Individual importers are encouraged to contact AMS at the above address to obtain further information concerning the nomination process including the beginning and ending dates of the established nomination period and required nomination forms and background information sheets. Certification and nomination procedures were promulgated in the final rule, published in the April 4, 1986, Federal Register (51 FR 11557). Organizations which have previously been certified to nominate members to the Board do not need to reapply for certification to nominate producers and importers for the existing vacancies.

The Act and the Order provide that the members of the Board shall serve for terms of 3 years. The Order also requires USDA to announce when a Board vacancy does or will exist. The following States have one or more members whose terms will expire in early 1997:

State or unit	Number of vacancies
Alabama	1
Arkansas	1
California	1
Colorado	1
Florida	1
Idaho	1
Illinois	1
Kansas	2
Kentucky	2
Minnesota	1
Missouri	2
Montana	2
Nebraska	2
New York	1
North Dakota	1
Oklahoma	2
Pennsylvania	1
South Dakota	1
Texas	6
Virginia	1
Wisconsin	1
Northwest Unit	1
Importer Unit	4

Since there are no anticipated vacancies on the Board for the remaining States' positions, or for the positions of the Northeast, mid-Atlantic, and Western (Oregon-Nevada) units, nominations will not be solicited from certified organizations or associations in those States or units.

Uncertified eligible producer organizations in all States that are interested in being certified as eligible to nominate cattle producers for appointment to the listed producer positions, must complete and submit an official "Application for Certification of Organization or Association," which must be received by close of business May 6, 1996. Uncertified eligible importer organizations that are interested in being certified as eligible to nominate importers for appointment to the listed importer positions must apply by the same date. Importers should not use the application form but should provide the requested information by letter as provided for in 7 CFR § 1260.540(b). Applications from States or units without vacant positions on the Board and other applications not received within the 30-day period after publication of this Notice in the Federal Register will be considered for eligibility to nominate producers or importers for subsequent vacancies on the Board.

Only those organizations or associations which meet the criteria for

certification of eligibility promulgated at 7 CFR § 1260.530 as published in 51 FR 11557, 11559 (April 4, 1986) are eligible for certification. Those criteria are:

(a) For State organizations or associations:

(1) Total paid membership must be comprised of at least a majority of cattle producers or represent at least a majority of cattle producers in a State or unit.

(2) Membership must represent a substantial number of producers who produce a substantial number of cattle in such State or unit.

(3) There must be a history of stability and permanency.

(4) There must be a primary or overriding purpose of promoting the economic welfare of cattle producers.

(b) For organizations or associations representing importers, the determination by the Secretary as to the eligibility of importer organizations or associations to nominate members to the Board shall be based on applications containing the following information:

(1) The number and type of members represented (i.e., beef or cattle importers, etc.).

(2) Annual import volume in pounds of beef and beef products and/or the number of head of cattle.

(3) The stability and permanency of the importer organization or association.

(4) The number of years in existence.

(5) The names of the countries of origin for cattle, beef, or beef products imported.

All certified organizations and associations, including those which were previously certified in the States or units having vacant positions on the Board, will be notified simultaneously in writing of the beginning and ending dates of the established nomination period and will be provided with required nomination forms and background information sheets.

The names of qualified nominees received by the established due date will be submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture for consideration as appointees to the Board.

The information collection requirements referenced in this notice have been previously approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the provisions of 44 U.S.C., Chapter 35 and have been assigned OMB No. 0581-0093, except Board member nominee information sheets are assigned OMB No. 0505-0001.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 2901 *et seq.*

Dated: March 29, 1996.

Lon Hatamiya,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 96-8304 Filed 4-3-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Forestry Research Advisory Council; Notice of Meeting

According to the Federal Advisory Committee Act of October 6, 1987, (Public Law 92-463, 86 Stat. 770-776) the U.S. Department of Agriculture announces the following meeting:

Name: Forestry Research Advisory Council.

Date: April 29-30, 1996.

Time: 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Place: Governor's House Hotel, 17th Street and Rhode Island Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20036

Type of Meeting: Open to the public. Persons may participate in the meeting if time and space permit.

Comments: The public may file written comments before or after the meeting by contacting the person below.

Purpose: The council agenda will include: Results of the 7th American Forest Congress; 1995 Farm Bill Implications; National Science and Technology Council strategy; Government Performance and Results Act; science planning as it relates to forestry and natural resources; review of the Cooperative Forestry Research Program (McIntire-Stennis); and other current research issues. *Contact Person for Agenda and More Information:* Dr. Ralph A. Otto, Natural Resources and Environment, Aerospace Center, Suite 329, Ag Box 2210, Washington, DC 20250-2210; telephone (202) 401-4555.

Dated: March 22, 1996.

B.H. Robinson,

Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

[FR Doc. 96-8243 Filed 4-3-96; 8:45 am]

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Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 96-002N]

Notice of Policy Change; Achieving the Zero Tolerance Performance Standard for Beef Carcasses by Knife Trimming and Vacuuming With Hot Water or Steam; Use of Acceptable Carcass Interventions for Reducing Carcass Contamination Without Prior Agency Approval

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing

a change to its trim-only policy for removing fecal, ingesta, and milk contamination from beef carcasses. Currently, all feces, ingesta, and milk must be physically removed from beef carcasses by knife trimming. Under this new policy, FSIS will permit the use of vacuuming beef carcasses with hot water or steam as an alternative to the trim-only policy for removing fecal and ingesta contamination, when such contamination is less than one inch in its greatest dimension.

This notice also lists other carcass decontamination systems that may be used on beef carcasses during the dressing operation. These other interventions may not be used to remove fecal or ingesta contamination. They may be used in conjunction with knife trimming or vacuuming with hot water or steam. They may also be used without prior Agency approval.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. William James, Director, Slaughter Inspection Standards and Procedures Division, Science and Technology, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250-3700; (202) 720-3219.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Effective prevention and removal of fecal and ingesta contamination are among the most important steps establishments must take to ensure the safety of beef carcasses. Such contamination may harbor *Escherichia coli* O157:H7, *Salmonella*, and other enteric pathogens. Given the association of pathogens with feces and intestinal contents, minimizing the exposure of carcasses to fecal and ingesta contamination and prompt and complete removal of such contamination is critical to food safety.

FSIS has had a long-standing policy prohibiting visible feces or ingesta on inspected and passed beef carcasses. Following the 1993 outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 food poisoning in the Western United States, FSIS strictly enforced the knife trim-only policy for removing feces and ingesta contamination from beef carcasses.

Prior to the outbreak, warm and ambient temperature washes were sometimes permitted by inspectors to be used to remove small flecks of contaminants. However, inspection personnel did not always determine whether the source of the flecks on beef carcasses was fecal or ingesta contamination or another source, such as rail dust.

After the 1993 outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7, FSIS reiterated that trimming