

believes that the failure to provide proper care and handling increases the risk of unnecessary loss to the seller and unnecessary suffering for the animal. It is the Agency's view that stockyards should provide appropriate facilities and follow animal care and handling practices and procedures that minimize the risk of injury, death, or other avoidable loss and avoid unnecessary suffering. Failure to provide appropriate services as detailed in these guidelines could result in the Agency's initiating an enforcement action brought pursuant to Sections 304, 307, and 312 of the Packers and Stockyards Act.

1. Care and Handling of Livestock

(a) Livestock at stockyards should be handled in a manner that protects the quality and value of the animal while also providing for the animal's welfare. Stockyard owners should establish and enforce practices and procedures that ensure the proper treatment of animals. Adequate instruction should be given to employees and proper notice given to truckers, market patrons, and other livestock handlers on the livestock care and handling practices to be followed at the facility. Abuse or mistreatment of animals should not be tolerated.

(b) Livestock facilities, including loading and unloading ramps, gates, fences, scales, and equipment used to provide stockyard services should be reasonably clean and well-maintained. Any object in the facility or on equipment used around livestock that is likely to cause bruising or injury to livestock, such as protruding nails, sharp edges, extended bolts, gate hooks, latches and hinges, should be eliminated or modified. All floors should be constructed or maintained in such a manner that livestock can walk without slipping to prevent injuries caused by falling down.

(c) Livestock of all species should be unloaded, yarded, moved through the facility, and reloaded in a manner to avoid bruising, injury, and unnecessary stress or suffering. When livestock are driven, sorted, or otherwise moved about a facility, such movement should be reasonably paced in a manner consistent with the type, temperament, and condition of the livestock being handled and stockyard conditions.

(d) Livestock driving devices, such as electric prods, canes, whips, paddles or canvas straps, should be used prudently and only to the extent necessary to handle or move livestock. Generally, paddles and canvas straps are equally effective and less likely than other types of driving devices to cause bruising or unnecessary excitement and stress. Electric prods should be of a

commercial type designed for use in moving livestock. All electric prodding devices should be used sparingly in order to avoid unnecessary stress and risk of injury to animals. Electric prods should never be applied to the rectum, vagina, eyes, ears or mouth areas.

(e) Stockyards should provide adequate pen space for the number and type of animals handled. Uncastrated mature males should be penned individually if necessary to prevent fighting. Bulls should be penned separately from cows and heifers to prevent mounting which can cripple small or weak animals.

(f) The Agency recognizes that transportation factors, types of livestock and animal nutrition requirements may make periods of withdrawal from feed and water desirable. These periods do not pose a threat to the quality and value of the animals if the animals are moved promptly to their destination. However, livestock held overnight at a stockyard, either before or after sale, should have access to feed and water within 24 hours of receipt at the stockyard.

2. Care and Handling of Nonambulatory Livestock.

(a) Nonambulatory animals, also referred to as "downed animals," are defined as those animals that are unable to stand or walk without assistance. The Agency believes prompt action is the key to preventing unnecessary suffering and protecting the economic value of nonambulatory animals, whether the action is providing veterinary care, transporting it to slaughter, euthanizing the animal, or taking some other effective action.

(b) Stockyards should provide adequate facilities and equipment necessary to handle any livestock they accept on consignment. If a stockyard chooses to accept nonambulatory livestock or if an animal becomes nonambulatory while at the stockyard, the stockyard should provide the necessary equipment to handle the livestock humanely, efficiently, and promptly to avoid unnecessary suffering and preserve the quality and value of the animal.

(c) Stockyard owners should establish pre-planned procedures that provide for assessing the condition of a nonambulatory animal and the options available for its care so prompt decisions can be made on its disposition and removal from the facility.

(d) Nonambulatory animals require special equipment for their handling and movement within the stockyard facility to avoid the risk of further injury and unnecessary suffering. Such

equipment may include a front-end loader, sled, belt or mat slide, specialized hoists or slings, or a combination of these devices. Special care should be taken when moving or loading nonambulatory animals onto a suitable conveyance. Nonambulatory animals should be gently rolled onto the conveyance, and an animal should not be shoved against a wall or fence to get it into a loader bucket.

(e) Stockyards that cannot provide proper care in handling nonambulatory livestock or do not have the required special equipment should adopt a policy of refusing to accept such livestock. Further, if an animal becomes nonambulatory while at such facility, the stockyard should promptly euthanize the animal before moving it or secure the prompt services of a veterinarian or other third party with the necessary equipment to provide proper care and handling for the animal.

(f) Dragging of a nonambulatory animal by its limbs is undesirable and should be avoided. In situations where an animal must be moved to accommodate a suitable conveyance, then padded belts should be attached to two noninjured limbs and the rope, cable, or chain attached to the belts. Animals should never be pulled by the neck. If these techniques for movement of the animal are not practical, then the animal should be promptly euthanized.

(g) Separate pens should be provided for weak, injured, and nonambulatory livestock. Such pens should be located for ease of access by specialized equipment. Feed and water should also be provided for the nonambulatory livestock.

(h) When an animal becomes nonambulatory, its condition should be promptly assessed, a decision made as to the proper care or disposition of the animal, and appropriate actions should be taken to protect its quality and value and to avoid unnecessary suffering. When it is determined that an animal should be euthanized, then the action should be taken promptly and humanely without awaiting the arrival of a rendering service.

(Authority: 7 U.S.C. 228(a); 7 CFR 2.22, 2.81)

Done at Washington, D.C. this 13th day of May 1996.

James R. Baker,

Administrator Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

[FR Doc. 96-12376 Filed 5-16-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-EN-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 050996F]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a public meeting.

DATES: This meeting will be held on June 12, 1996, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Radisson Bay Harbor Inn, 7700 Courtney Campbell Causeway, Tampa, FL; telephone: 813-281-8900.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 5401 West Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 331, Tampa, FL 33609.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Leard, Senior Fishery Biologist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: 813-228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the meeting will be to review Draft Amendment 9 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, U.S. Waters with Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Regulatory Impact Review (RIR), Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, and Social Impact Assessment (SIA). The amendment is intended to address the Council's commitment to reduce the bycatch mortality of red snapper, particularly juveniles, from shrimp trawls. The amendment includes a review of previous actions and their effects on bycatch as well as various alternatives.

The Shrimp Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will review the draft amendment with various management alternatives for gear including: (1) Status Quo - no change to existing gear regulations; and (2) Requiring Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) in all areas of the exclusive economic zone. They will also look at area specific usage of BRDs including requiring BRDs: (1) inside the 100 fathom contour; (2) inside the 100 fathom contour and west of Cape San Blas, Florida; and (3) between the 10 and 100 fathom contours. Other alternatives that will be discussed include: Area closures, seasonal closures, BRD testing criteria, and a

protocol for BRD certification. The Shrimp SSC will also consider a Regulatory Impact Review, which mainly reviews the economic ramifications of the proposed amendment; a Social Impact Assessment; and any environmental consequences. Also considered will be the effects of other Federal laws and regulations.

The Shrimp SSC is comprised of scientists that have specialized in working with the shrimp fishery of the Gulf and have been appointed to advise the Council on shrimp management.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by June 5, 1996.

Dated: May 10, 1996.

Richard H. Schaefer,
Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Service.

[FR Doc. 96-12449 Filed 5-16-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

[I.D. 050996E]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a public meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held on June 6, 1996, beginning at 8:00 a.m. and will conclude at 5:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Tampa Airport Hilton at Metro Center, 2225 North Lois Avenue, Tampa, FL; 813-877-6688.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 5401 West Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 331, Tampa, FL 33609.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Antonio B. Lamberte, Economist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: 813-228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the meeting is to review Draft Amendment 9 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, U.S. Waters with Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Regulatory Impact Review (RIR), Initial

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, and Social Impact Assessment (SIA). The amendment is intended to address the Council's commitment to reduce the bycatch mortality of red snapper, particularly juveniles, from shrimp trawls. The amendment includes a review of previous actions and their effects on bycatch as well as various alternatives.

The Socioeconomic Panel (SEP) will review the draft amendment with various management alternatives for gear including: (1) Status Quo - no change to existing gear regulations; and (2) Requiring Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRD) in all areas of the exclusive economic zone. They will also look at area specific usage of BRDs including requiring BRDs: (1) inside the 100 fathom contour; (2) inside the 100 fathom contour and west of Cape San Blas, Florida; and (3) between the 10 and 100 fathom contours. Other alternatives that will be discussed include: area closures, seasonal closures, BRD testing criteria, and a protocol for BRD certification. The SEP will focus their review on the economic and social impacts of these various alternatives, as these impacts are discussed in the RIR and the SIA.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by May 30, 1996.

Dated: May 10, 1996.

Richard H. Schaefer,
Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 96-12451 Filed 5-16-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

[I.D. 050996G]

Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a public meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held on May 31, 1996, beginning at 10 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Council office.