

# 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

### Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

April 11, 1997.

The Department of Agriculture has submitted the following information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Comments regarding (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology should be addressed to: Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Washington, DC 20503 and to Department Clearance Office, USDA, OCIO, Mail Stop 7602, Washington, DC 20250-7602. Comments regarding these information collections are best assured of having their full effect if received within 30 days of this notification. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling (202) 720-6204 or (202) 720-6746.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number and the agency informs potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information that such persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it

displays a currently valid OMB control number.

#### • Rural Utilities Service

*Title:* Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program (7 CFR 1703, Subpart D).

*OMB Control Number:* 0572-0096.

*Summary:* The program provides grants to rural community facilities such as schools, hospitals, and medical centers; to encourage, improve, and make affordable. The use of advanced telecommunications and computer networks to provide educational and medical benefits to people living in rural areas.

*Need and Use of the Information:* This information is required in order to determine eligibility; specific purpose for which grant will be used; project feasibility; need for improved educational or medical facility, etc.

*Description of Respondents:* Business or other for-profit.

*Number of Respondents:* 300.

*Frequency of Responses:* Recordkeeping; Reporting: On occasion.

*Total Burden Hours:* 18,998.

#### • Agricultural Marketing Service

*Title:* Tart Cherries Grown in the States of Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.

*OMB Control Number:* 0581-0177.

*Summary:* The USDA needs information from growers to select committee numbers, to conduct referenda, and to amend the marketing order and agreement.

*Need and Use of the Information:* The information is used to regulate the provisions of Marketing Order No. 930.

*Description of Respondents:* Business or other for-profit; Farms.

*Number of Respondents:* 1,268.

*Frequency of Responses:* Reporting: On occasion.

*Total Burden Hours:* 990.

**Donald Hulcher,**

*Departmental Clearance Officer.*

[FR Doc. 97-10165 Filed 4-18-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-01-M

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Office of the Chief Information Officer; Granting of Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) Waiver for Digital Signature Standard

**AGENCY:** Office of the Chief Information Officer, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

**ACTION:** Notice of granting of FIPS waiver request.

**SUMMARY:** The Chief Information Officer has granted a waiver to the Agricultural Marketing Service to use Rivest, Shamir, and Adleman (RSA) digital signature technology in lieu of the Digital Signature Standard (DSS) specified by the Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 186. This waiver was made pursuant to section 111(d) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 as amended by the Computer Security Act of 1987, Public Law 100-235. The Waiver does not apply to any procurement, but allows use of a capability already available in the agency.

**DATES:** The waiver takes effect on (date of April 10, 1997) and remains valid for the life of the core software and subject to the demands of the USDA Information System Technology Architecture.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joseph Ware, Chief, Information Management Division, Office of the Chief Information Officer, USDA, 202-690-2118.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 186, "Digital Signature Standard," establishes a standard for generating a digital signature that can be used to verify that electronic documents originated with the signatory of the document, and to protect the entire document against unauthorized modifications of its text. FIPS 186 allows Federal agency heads to waive use of the FIPS 186 under certain circumstances.

A waiver may be granted if compliance with the standard would adversely affect the accomplishment of the mission of an operator of a Federal computer system.

A waiver may also be granted if compliance with the standard would cause a major adverse financial impact on the operator of a Federal computer

system which is not offset by Government-wide savings.

The Chief Information Officer has granted a waiver to Agricultural Marketing Service to employ the RSA digital signature algorithm instead of one conforming to FIPS 186 DSS. The RSA algorithm provides document security that is at least comparable to that specified by FIPS 186 DSS. Unlike the DSS, the algorithm is widely used in a variety of commercial software applications, making development of applications to generate secure USDA documents feasible and cost-effective. Use of DSS would cause major adverse financial impact on the agency, and therefore on its fee-paying customers, because the cost of developing new software employing DSS would be many times the cost of using existing commercial software that employs the RSA algorithm. In accordance with the requirements of FIPS 186, notice of this waiver has been sent to the National Institute of Standards and Technology, United States Department of Commerce; to the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight of the House of Representatives; and to the Committee on Governmental Affairs of the United States Senate.

**Anne F. Thomson Reed,**

*Acting Chief Information Officer.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Agricultural Marketing Service

[FV-96-701]

#### **Fresh Cut Flowers and Fresh Cut Greens Promotion and Information Order; Referendum Order**

**AGENCY:** Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA

**ACTION:** Notice; Referendum order.

**SUMMARY:** This document gives notice that a referendum will be conducted to determine whether qualified handlers of fresh cut flowers and greens favor the continuation of the Fresh Cut Flowers and Fresh Cut Greens Promotion and Information Order (Order). The Order must be favored by a simple majority of the qualified handlers voting in the referendum. This action establishes the voting period, representative period, method of voting, and agents.

**DATES:** The referendum will be conducted by mail ballot from June 2 through June 20, 1997. The representative period for establishing voter eligibility shall be the period from

January 1, 1996, through December 31, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the Fresh Cut Flowers and Fresh Cut Greens Promotion and Information Order may be obtained from: Referendum Agent, Research and Promotion Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, Room 2535-S, Washington, DC 20090-6456, fax (202) 205-2800.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Sonia N. Jimenez, Research and Promotion Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, Room 2535-S, Washington, DC 20090-6456, telephone (202) 720-9916 or (888) 720-9917.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A referendum will be conducted among qualified handlers of fresh cut flowers and greens to determine whether the continuance of the Fresh Cut Flowers and Fresh Cut Greens Promotion and Information Order (Order) (7 CFR Part 1208) is favored by persons voting in the referendum. The Order is authorized under the Fresh Cut Flowers and Fresh Cut Greens Promotion and Information Act (Act) (7 U.S.C. 6801-6814).

The representative period for establishing voter eligibility for the referendum shall be the period from January 1, 1996, through December 31, 1996. Only those wholesale handlers (including, but not limited to, wholesale jobbers, bouquet and floral article manufacturers, auction houses that clear the sale of cut flowers and greens, and retail distribution centers), producers, and importers who have annual sales of \$750,000 or more of fresh cut flowers and greens and who sell those products to exempt handlers, retailers, or consumers are considered qualified handlers and are eligible to vote in the referendum. Persons who have received an exemption from assessment for the entire representative period are ineligible to vote. The referendum shall be conducted by mail ballot from June 2 through 20, 1997.

Section 7 of the Act provides that the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretary) shall conduct a referendum not later than 3 years after the issuance of an order to ascertain whether the order then in effect shall be continued. The Order was issued on December 29, 1994. Paragraph (a)(2) of Section 7 of the Act requires that the Order be approved by a simple majority of all votes cast in the referendum. In addition, paragraph (b) of Section 7 of the Act specifies that each qualified handler eligible to vote in the referendum shall be entitled to cast one vote for each separate facility of the person that is an eligible separate

facility. Eligible separate facility is defined in paragraph (b)(2) of Section 7 of the Act as a handling or marketing facility of a qualified handler that is physically located away from other facilities of the qualified handler or that the business function of the separate facility is substantially different from the functions of other facilities owned or operated by the qualified handler and the annual sales of cut flowers and cut greens to retailers and exempt handlers from the facility are \$750,000 or more annually. The Order shall continue in effect if it is approved by a simple majority of qualified handlers voting in the referendum. If the Secretary determines that the Order has not been approved by a simple majority of all votes in the referendum, or the Secretary determines that suspension or termination of the Order is favored by a simple majority of all votes cast in the referendum, the Secretary shall terminate or suspend the collection of assessments under the Order and suspend or terminate activities under the Order as soon as practicable.

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 [Pub. L. 104-13], the referendum ballot has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and has been assigned OMB number 0581-0093. There are approximately 692 eligible voters representing approximately 923 votes, some of which represent separate facilities. It will take an average of 15 minutes for each voter to read the voting instructions and complete the referendum ballot. The total burden on the total number of voters will be 77 hours.

#### **Referendum Order**

It is hereby directed that a referendum be conducted among qualified handlers to determine whether they favor the continuance of the Order. The representative period for establishing voter eligibility for the referendum shall be the period from January 1, 1996, through December 31, 1996. A referendum shall be conducted by mail ballot from June 2 through 20, 1997.

Section 7 of the Act provides that the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretary) shall conduct a referendum not later than 3 years after the issuance of an order to ascertain whether the order then in effect shall be continued. The Order shall be continued only if approved by a simple majority of all votes cast in the referendum.

Referendum procedures were published in the **Federal Register** on April 14, 1997 [62 FR 18033]. The Procedure for the Conduct of Referenda in Connection with the Fresh Cut