

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

Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture Meeting

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established the Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture. In accordance with section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), notice is hereby given of the sixth meeting of the Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture. The purpose of this meeting is to prepare for the Commission's final report on the effects of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 and any other necessary business. This meeting will be open to the public.

PLACE, DATE, AND TIME OF MEETING: The meeting will be held in Room 221-A, Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250, from 8:30-5:00 EST on July 8, 1999, and 8:30 am-12 noon EST on July 9, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tim Peters (202-720-4860), Assistant Director, Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture, c/o Office of the Chief Economist, or Keith J. Collins (202-720-5955), Chief Economist, Room 3702, South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue., Washington, D.C. 20250-0524.

Dated: June 21, 1999.

Keith J. Collins

Chief Economist

[FR Doc. 99-16775 Filed 6-30-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

Notice of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board Northeast Regional Listening Session

AGENCY: Research, Education, and Economics, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of *Listening Session*.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., the United States Department of Agriculture announces a *Northeast Regional Listening Session* of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, which represents 30 constituent categories, as specified in section 802 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Pub. L. No. 104-127), will send representatives of its membership (6 members, the Executive Director, a Representative from the Research, Education, and Economics Mission area, and a USDA administrative support person) to the Joint Northeast Region Sections Conference to hold a *Northeast Regional Listening Session*, 8:00 a.m. until noon on July 12, 1999.

The *Northeast Regional Listening Session* will engage northeast regional stakeholders (small farmers, producers/ranchers, academia including 1890 and 1994 institutions, the private sector, and other stakeholder groups) in panel sessions to present statements to Advisory Board members on agricultural research and education priorities and other issues of significant concern to the Northeast Region. Findings of this *Listening Session* will be presented to the full Advisory Board for consideration in its ongoing effort to advise USDA on future agricultural research and education priorities. Time will be allowed at the end of *Listening Session* panels for open discussion and audience participation.

Dates: *Northeast Regional Listening Session*, July 12, 1999, 8:00 a.m. until noon.

Place: Sheraton Harborside Hotel, Portsmouth, NH.

Type of Meeting: Open to the public.

Comments: The public may file written comments before or within 2 weeks after the meeting with the contact person. All statements will become a part of the official records of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board and will be kept on file for public review in the Office of the Advisory Board; Research, Education, and Economics; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Washington, D.C. 20250-2255.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Deborah Hanfman, Executive Director, National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, Research, Education, and Economics Advisory Board Office, Room 3918 South Building, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP: 2255, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-2255. Telephone: 202-720-3684. Fax: 202-720-6199, or e-mail: lshea@reeusda.gov.

Done at Washington, D.C. this 23rd day of June 1999.

I. Miley Gonzalez,

Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics.

[FR Doc. 99-16748 Filed 6-30-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Food Distribution Program: Substitution of Donated Poultry With Commercial Poultry

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) intent to continue a demonstration project to test program changes designed to improve the State processing of donated poultry by allowing the substitution of donated poultry supplied by the Department of Agriculture (the Department) with commercial poultry. The Department is currently operating a demonstration project that allows selected poultry processors to substitute commercial poultry for donated poultry in the State processing of donated poultry. Only bulk pack poultry and poultry parts are eligible for substitution under the current demonstration

project. Notice of the project, which has operated from February 1, 1996 through June 30, 1997, was first published in the **Federal Register** at 61 FR 5373 on February 12, 1996. The project was then expanded and extended through June 30, 1999 (62 FR 25885). Under the demonstration project, FNS invoked its authority under 7 CFR 250.30(t) to waive the current prohibition at 7 CFR 250.30(f)(1)(i) against the substitution of poultry items and to establish the criteria under which substitution will be permitted.

The Department will continue to operate the demonstration project from July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000. The Department will use the results of the demonstration project to further examine whether allowing the substitution will result in increased processor participation and provide a greater variety of processed end products to recipient agencies in a more timely manner at lower costs. The Department believes that the demonstration is providing additional benefits to the program recipients currently. However, the Food Distribution Division has undertaken a complete review of the current program through Business Process Reengineering (BPR). Recommendations for program change will be forthcoming and the issues regarding substitution of all donated foods will be a priority topic of discussion.

DATES: The proposals described in this Notice may be submitted to FNS through December 30, 1999. Note that the demonstration project runs until June 30, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Proposals should be sent to David Brothers, Program Analyst, Schools and Institutions Branch, Food Distribution Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Park Office Center, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302-1594.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Brothers, Schools and Institutions Branch, at (703) 305-2644.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Executive Order 12866

This notice has been determined to be not significant and therefore was not reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget under Executive Order 12866.

Executive Order 12372

This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.550 and is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation

with State and local officials (7 CFR part 3015, subpart V and final rule-related notices published at 48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983 and 49 FR 22675, May 31, 1984).

Regulatory Flexibility Act

This action is not a rule as defined by the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601-612) and is thus exempt from the provisions of that Act.

Background

Section 250.30 of the current Food Distribution Program regulations (7 CFR part 250) sets forth the terms and conditions under which distributing agencies, subdistributing agencies, or recipient agencies may enter into contracts for processing donated foods and prescribes the minimum requirements to be included in such contracts. Section 250.30(t) authorizes FNS to waive any of the requirements contained in 7 CFR part 250 for the purpose of conducting demonstration projects to test program changes designed to improve the State processing of donated foods.

Current Program Requirements

The State processing regulations at § 250.30(f)(1)(i) currently allow for the substitution of certain specified donated food items with commercial foods, with the exception of meat and poultry. Under the current regulations at § 250.30(g), when donated meat or poultry products are processed or when any commercial meat or poultry products are incorporated into an end product containing one or more donated foods, all of the processing is required to be performed in plants under continuous Federal meat or poultry inspection or continuous State meat or poultry inspection in States certified to have programs at least equal to the Federal inspection programs. In addition to Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) inspection, all donated meat and poultry processing must be performed under Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) acceptance service grading.

Traditionally only a few companies have processed donated poultry. Those processors have stated that the policy prohibiting the substitution of donated poultry reduces the quantity of donated poultry they are able to accept and process during a given period. Poultry purchased by USDA for further processing is bulk chill packed. Processors must schedule production around deliveries of the donated poultry because it is a highly perishable product. Some of the processors must schedule production around deliveries

of donated poultry for up to 30 individual States. Vendors do not always deliver donated poultry to the processors as scheduled, causing delays in production of end products. These delays may be alleviated if the processors can substitute their commercial poultry for donated poultry.

Demonstration Project

From July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000, the Department will continue to operate a demonstration project under which it will permit approved processors to substitute commercial poultry for donated poultry in the State processing of donated poultry. Processors may submit proposals and be approved to participate in the demonstration project during this time. FNS is invoking its authority under 7 CFR 250.30(t) to waive the current prohibition in 7 CFR 250.30(f)(1)(i) against the substitution of poultry for purposes of this demonstration project.

The demonstration project will continue to be limited to bulk pack poultry and poultry parts because the processing of such items can be readily evaluated. The definition of substitution in § 250.3 requires the replacement of commercial product for donated food to be of the same generic identity and equal or better quality.

FNS is inviting interested poultry processors to submit written proposals to participate in the demonstration project. The following basic requirements will apply to the demonstration project:

- As with the processing of donated poultry into end products, AMS graders must monitor the processing of any substituted commercial poultry to ensure program integrity is maintained.
- Only bulk pack poultry and poultry parts delivered by USDA vendors to the processor will be eligible for substitution. No backhauled product will be eligible. (Backhauled product is typically cut-up frozen poultry parts delivered to schools which may be turned over to processors for further processing at a later time.)
- Commercial poultry substituted for donated poultry must be certified by an AMS grader as complying with all product specifications for the donated poultry.
- Substitution of commercial poultry may occur in advance of the actual receipt of the donated poultry by the processor. However, no substitution may occur before the product is purchased by USDA and the contract is awarded. Lead time between the purchase and delivery of donated poultry may be up to five weeks. Any variation between the amount of

commercial poultry substituted and the amount of donated poultry received by the processor will be adjusted according to guidelines furnished by USDA.

- Any donated poultry not used in end products because of substitution must only be used by the processor at one of its facilities in other commercial processed products and cannot be sold as an intact unit. However, in lieu of processing the donated poultry, the processor may use the product to fulfill other contracts with USDA provided all terms of the other contract are met.

- The only regulatory provision or State processing contract term affected by the demonstration project is the prohibition on substitution of poultry (§ 250.30(f)(1)(i) of the regulations). All other regulatory and contract requirements remain unchanged and must still be met by processors participating in the demonstration project.

The demonstration project will enable FNS to evaluate whether to amend program regulations to provide for the substitution of donated poultry with commercial poultry in the State processing program. Particular attention will be paid to whether such an amendment of the regulations would probably increase the number of processors participating, and whether it would probably increase the quantity of donated poultry that each processor accepts for processing. Further, FNS will attempt to determine whether the expected increase in competition and the expected increase in the quantity of donated poultry accepted for processing enables processors to function more efficiently, producing a greater variety of processed poultry end products in a more timely manner at lower costs.

The data gathered to date from recipient agencies, AMS graders, and AMS procurement has been positive. The data suggests that given additional time, more poultry processors will decide to participate.

Interested processors should submit a written proposal to FNS outlining how they plan to carry out the substitution while complying with the above conditions. Processors who are currently participating in the demonstration should apply to continue in the demonstration. The proposal must contain (1) a step-by-step description of how production will be monitored (2) a complete description of the records that will be maintained for (a) the commercial poultry substituted for the donated poultry (b) the disposition of the donated poultry delivered. All proposals will be reviewed by representatives of the Food Distribution Division of FNS and by

representatives of AMS Poultry Division's Grading Branch. Companies approved for participation in the demonstration project will be required to enter into an agreement with FNS and AMS which authorizes the processor to substitute commercial bulk pack poultry and poultry parts in fulfilling any current or future State processing contracts during the demonstration project period. Participation in the demonstration project will not ensure the processor will receive any State processing contracts.

Dated: June 24, 1999.

Samuel Chambers, Jr.,

Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.
[FR Doc. 99-16761 Filed 6-30-99; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-30-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Foreign Agricultural Service

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces that the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) intends to request an extension for a currently approved information collection procedure for Sugar Import Licensing Programs described in 7 CFR part 1530.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received on or before August 30, 1999 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Mail or deliver comments to Stephen C. Hammond, Director, Import Policies and Programs Division, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 1021, 1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington DC 20250-1021, telephone (202) 720-2916.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David J. Williams, Licensing Authority, Stop 1021, 1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington DC 20250-1021, (202) 720-2916.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Sugar to be Imported and Re-exported in Refined Form or in Sugar Containing Products or Used for the Production of Polyhydric Alcohol.

OMB Number: 0551-0015.

Expiration Date of Approval: November 30, 1999.

Type of Request: Extension and revision of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The primary objective of the Sugar Import Licensing Program is to permit entry of raw cane sugar exempt from the sugar tariff-rate quota for re-export in refined form or in a sugar containing product or for the production of certain polyhydric alcohols. These programs are in use by as many as 400 licensees currently eligible to participate. Under 7 CFR part 1530, licensees are required to submit the following: (1) "Application for a license" information required for participation as outlined in sections 1530.104 and 1530.110, (2) "Regular reporting" of import, export, transfer, or use for charges and credits to licenses under section 1530.109, and (3) "miscellaneous submission" of bonds or letters credit under section 1530.107, appeals to determinations by the licensing authority under section 1530.112, or requests to the licensing authority for waivers under section 1530.113. In addition, each participant must maintain records on all program reports as set forth in section 1530.110. The information collected is used by the licensing authority to manage, plan, evaluate and account for program activities. The reports and records are required to ensure the proper operation of these programs.

Estimate of Burden: (1) "application for a license" would require 20 hours per response; (2) "regular reporting" would require between 10 and 15 minutes per transaction. The number of transactions per respondent will vary; (3) "miscellaneous submission" would require between 1 or 2 hours per bond or letter of credit, 2 to 10 hours per waiver request, and 10 to 100 hours per appeal.

Respondents: Sugar refiners, manufacturers of sugar containing products and producers of polyhydric alcohol.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 250.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: New/Renew License: 1; Regular reporting: 75 transactions, average; Miscellaneous: 50/250 bonds/letters of credit; 5/250 waiver requests; and 0/250 appeals.

Estimated Total Burden Hours on Respondents: 8,230 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Kimberly Chisley, the Agency Information Collection Coordinator, at (202) 720-2568.

Request for Comments

The public is invited to submit comments and suggestions to the above address regarding the accuracy of the burden estimate, ways to minimize the burden, including the use of automated