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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket No. FV99-944-1 NC]

Notice of Request for Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), this notice announces the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) intention to request an extension for and revision to a currently approved information collection for specified exempt import commodities.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by November 12, 1999.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS: Contact Valerie L. Emmer-Scott, Marketing Specialist, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, room 2525-S., P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456; Tel: (202) 205-2829, Fax: (202) 720-5698, or E-mail: moabdocket_clerk@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Specified Commodities Imported into the United States Exempt from Import Requirements.

OMB Number: 0581-0167.

Expiration Date of Approval: May 31, 2000.

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

Abstract: Section 8e of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (AMAA), as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674) requires that whenever the Secretary of Agriculture issues grade, size, quality, or maturity regulations under domestic marketing orders for certain commodities, the same or

comparable regulations on imports of those commodities must be issued. Import regulations apply only during those periods when domestic marketing order regulations are in effect. Currently, the following commodities are subject to Section 8e import regulations: avocados, dates (other than dates for processing), hazelnuts, grapefruit, table grapes, kiwifruit, limes, olives (other than Spanish-style olives) onions, oranges, Irish potatoes, prunes, raisins, tomatoes, and walnuts. However, imports of these commodities are exempt from such requirements if they are imported for such outlets as processing, charity, animal feed, seed, and distribution to relief agencies, when those outlets are exempt under the applicable marketing order.

Safeguard procedures in the form of importer and receiver reporting requirements are used to ensure that the imported commodity is provided to authorized exempt outlets. The safeguard procedures are similar to the reports currently required by most domestic marketing orders. The import regulations require importers and receivers of imported fruit, vegetable, and specialty crops to submit a form, as provided in sections 944.350, 980.501, and 999.500.

An importer wishing to import commodities for exempt purposes must complete, prior to importation, an Importer's Exempt Commodity Form (FV-6), which is a four-part form. Copy one is presented to the U.S. Customs Service. The importer files copy two with the Marketing Order Administration Branch (MOAB) of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, within two days after the commodity enters the United States. The third copy of the form accompanies the exempt shipment to its intended destination. The receiver certifies that the commodity has been received and that it will be utilized for authorized exempt purposes. The receiver then files copy three with MOAB, within two days after receiving the commodity. The fourth copy is retained by the importer.

The Department of Agriculture (Department) utilizes this information to ensure that imported goods destined for exempt outlets are given no less favorable treatment than that afforded to domestic goods destined for such exempt outlets. These exemptions are

consistent with Section 8e import regulations under the Act.

This form requires the minimum amount of information necessary to effectively carry out the requirements of the Act, and its use is necessary to fulfill the intent of the Act, and to administer Section 8e compliance activities.

In addition, included in this extension and revision of a currently approved information collection is another form titled, "Civil Penalty Stipulation Agreement" (FV-7). This form provides AMS with an additional tool to obtain resolution of certain cases under the AMAA without the cost of going to a hearing. Stipulation agreements may be appropriate for, but not limited to, instances of minor violations of a marketing order or marketing agreement or section 8e of the AMAA. However, AMS is not under any obligation to issue stipulation agreements. The only requirement for this form is a signature, therefore, there is no burden on the person if they agree to the Agreement and return it.

The information collected is used primarily by authorized representatives of the Department, including AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs' regional and headquarters staff. AMS is the primary user of the information.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .1698 hours per response.

Respondents: Importers and receivers of exempt commodities.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 1,920.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 5.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 1,632 hours.

Comments are invited on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) 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.

Comments should reference OMB No. 0581-0167 and be mailed to Docket Clerk, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, Room 2525-S, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; Fax (202) 720-5698; or E-mail: moabdocket—clerk@usda.gov. Comments should reference the docket number and the date and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**. All comments received will be available for public inspection in the Office of the Docket Clerk during regular USDA business hours at 14th and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., room 2525-S.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Signed: September 7, 1999

Robert C. Keeney

Deputy Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs

[FR Doc. 99-23790 Filed 9-10-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Federal Crop Insurance Corporation

Notice and Request for Public Comment on the Watermelon Pilot Crop Insurance Program

AGENCY: Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice with request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice announces that the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) is hereby suspending the current watermelon pilot crop insurance program for the 2000 crop year. FCIC will continue to work with producers, industry representatives, and others to develop a revised watermelon insurance program that may better meet the needs of producers. The intended effect of this action is to advise all interested parties of FCIC's suspension of the current watermelon program for the 2000 crop year and to solicit comments regarding a revised watermelon pilot crop insurance program.

DATES: Written comments and opinions on suggested improvements for the insurance of watermelons will be accepted until close of business November 12, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to the Director, Research and Evaluation Division, Federal Crop Insurance

Corporation, United States Department of Agriculture, 9435 Holmes Road, Kansas City, MO 64131. Comments may also be sent via the Internet to DIRECTORPDD@RM.FCIC.USDA.GOV. A copy of each response will be available for public inspection and copying from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., CDT, Monday through Friday except holidays, at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kathy Tiefel, Insurance Management Specialist, Research and Development Division, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, at the Kansas City, MO, address listed above, telephone (816) 926-6343.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The current watermelon pilot crop insurance program was implemented for the 1999 crop year in the following fifteen counties in eight States: Geneva County in Alabama; Sussex County in Delaware; Alachua, Jackson, and Manatee Counties in Florida; Crisp, Tift, Turner, and Worth Counties in Georgia; Wicomico County in Maryland; Chowan and Sampson Counties in North Carolina; and Duval, Frio, and Hidalgo Counties in Texas. The selected pilot program counties accounted for approximately 19 percent of the national watermelon planted acreage. The pilot program utilized an actual production history (APH) plan of insurance. As a result of complaints received regarding the watermelon pilot crop insurance program concerning excess watermelon production and determination of market prices, FCIC is suspending the current program for the 2000 crop year. FCIC will continue to work with producers, industry representatives, and others to develop a watermelon insurance program that may better meet the needs of producers.

Notice

FCIC is hereby suspending the current watermelon pilot crop insurance program for the 2000 crop year. Producers with existing watermelon policies will have those policies canceled by the cancellation date in accordance with the terms of the policy. FCIC will continue to work with producers, industry representatives, and others to develop a watermelon insurance program that may better meet the needs of producers. Plans of insurance other than the APH plan will be considered. FCIC is soliciting comments regarding a revised watermelon pilot crop insurance program.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1506(l), 1506(p).

Signed in Washington, DC, on September 7, 1999.

Kenneth D. Ackerman,

Manager, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Proposed Changes in NCRS National Handbook of Conservation Practices for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), DOA.

ACTION: Notice of proposed changes in the NRCS National Handbook of Conservation Practices for review and comment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the intention of NRCS to issue a series of new or revised conservation practice standards in its National Handbook of Conservation Practices. These standards include Closure of Waste Impoundments, Conservation Cover, Contour Farming, Cover Crop, Contour Stripcropping, Grassed Waterway, and Irrigation System—Microirrigation. NRCS State Conservationists who choose to adopt these practices for use within their States will incorporate them into Section IV of their Field Office Technical Guide. These practices may be used in conservation systems that treat highly erodible land or on land determined to be wetland.

EFFECTIVE DATES: Comments will be received on or before November 12, 1999. This series of new or revised conservation practice standards will be adopted after the close of the 60-day period.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Single copies of these standards are available from NRCS-CED in Washington, DC. Submit individual inquiries and return any comments in writing to William Hughey, National Agricultural Engineer, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Post Office Box 2890, Room 6139-S, Washington, DC 20013-2890. Telephone Number 202-720-5023. The standards are also available and can be downloaded from the Internet at: http://www.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/practice_stdts.html.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 343 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 requires NRCS to make available for public review and comment proposed