

Notices

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Friday, May 30, 2003

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.

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

African Development Meeting; Board of Directors Meeting

Time: 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Place: ADF headquarters.

Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2003.

Status: Open.

Agenda

10 a.m.—Chairman's Report;
10:30 a.m.—President's Report;
11 a.m.—New Business;
11:30 a.m.—Adjournment.

If you have any questions or comments, please direct them to Doris Martin, General Counsel, who may be reached at (202) 673-3916.

Nathaniel Fields,

President.

[FR Doc. 03-13588 Filed 5-27-03; 4:42 pm]

BILLING CODE 6116-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. No. TB-03-08]

Flue-Cured Tobacco Advisory Committee; Open Meeting

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of advisory committee meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) announcement is made of a forthcoming meeting of the Flue-Cured Tobacco Advisory Committee.

DATES: The meeting will be held on June 12, 2003, at 1 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Tobacco Programs, Flue-Cured Tobacco

Cooperative Stabilization Corporation Building, Room 223, 1306 Annapolis Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina 27608.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John P. Duncan III, Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs, AMS, USDA, STOP 0280, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0280, telephone number (202) 205-0567 or fax (202) 205-0235.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the meeting is to elect officers, recommend opening dates and selling schedules, and discuss other related issues for the 2003 flue-cured tobacco marketing season.

The meeting is open to the public. Persons, other than members, who wish to address the Committee at the meeting should contact John P. Duncan III, Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs, AMS, USDA, STOP 0280, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C. 20250-0280, prior to the meeting. Written statements may be submitted to the Committee before, at or after the meeting. If you need any accommodations to participate in the meeting, please contact the Tobacco Programs at (202) 205-0567 by June 6, 2003, and inform us of your needs.

Dated: May 23, 2003.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 03-13522 Filed 5-29-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: Crook County Resource Advisory Committee, Sundance, Wyoming, USDA, Forest Service.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the authorities in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463) and under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-393) the Black Hills National Forests' Crook County Resource Advisory Committee will meet Monday June 16, 2003 in Sundance, Wyoming for a business meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The business meeting on June 16, begins at 6:30 p.m., at U.S. Forest Service, Bearlodge Ranger District office, 121 South 21st Street, Sundance, Wyoming. Agenda topics will include Bearlodge Fuel Break, watershed and wildlife Projects, Sundance Campground tree planting and updates on April's actions. A public forum will begin at 8:30 p.m. (MT).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Kozel, Bearlodge District Ranger and Designated Federal Officer, at (307) 283-1361.

Dated: May 22, 2003.

Steve Kozel,

Bearlodge District Ranger.

[FR Doc. 03-13494 Filed 5-29-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Livestock and Meat Marketing Study

AGENCY: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration will be conducting a broad study of marketing methods used in the livestock and red meat industries, as mandated by Congress. The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments on the scope and approach of the study, the names of persons to be considered for involvement in peer reviews, and the names of organizations that might be interested in bidding on the study.

DATES: Comments will be considered if received by June 30, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Send comments via electronic mail to comments.gipsa@usda.gov. Send hardcopy written comments to Tess Butler, GIPSA, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 1647-S, Washington, DC 20250-3604, or fax to (202) 690-2755. All comments should make reference to the date and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**, and will be available for public inspection in the above office during regular business hours (7 CFR 1.27(b)).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Gerald E. Grinnell, Director, Economic and Statistical Support Staff, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, Room 1644-S, STOP 3647, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20250-3647 or e-mail to gerald.e.grinnell@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921, as amended and supplemented (7 U.S.C. 181-229) (P&S Act). The P&S Act prohibits unfair, deceptive, and fraudulent practices by market agencies, dealers, stockyards, packers, swine contractors, and live poultry dealers in the livestock, meatpacking, and poultry industries. During the development of the 2002 Farm Bill, the Senate considered an amendment to the P&S Act that would make it unlawful for a packer to own, control, or feed livestock intended for slaughter. After much debate, the proposed amendment was dropped in conference.

The issue of packer ownership of livestock is highly contentious among livestock industry members. Some industry participants are concerned that packer ownership of livestock before they are ready for slaughter and other advance procurement arrangements (some of which are referred to as captive supplies¹), may enable packers to reduce spot market prices, and that the arrangements may threaten the future of spot markets or reduce market opportunities for small producers. Others believe that advance marketing arrangements (both procurement and

sales) increase efficiency, quality of products, responsiveness to changing consumer preferences, and competitiveness with other meats.

Issues surrounding packer ownership of livestock for slaughter are part of a larger set of issues relating to concentration and vertical coordination in the livestock and meat system. Many questions remain unanswered about these issues. The effects of the ownership of livestock by packers and its impacts on the livestock and meat marketing industries needs to be better understood before it can be determined whether legislative action may be appropriate. In the fiscal year 2003 budget (Pub. L. 108-7), Congress specified that \$4.5 million of the GIPSA budget is to be used for a packer concentration study. Congress specified that the study should address "issues surrounding a ban on packer ownership" (*Congressional Record*, February 12, 2003, page H870).

Packer ownership is one of a broad range of alternative marketing arrangements that have emerged in the cattle, hog, lamb, and meat industries to coordinate activities between and within stages of the livestock and meat system. It is difficult to make important decisions about these practices in the absence of sound analyses of their use and implications. The planned study will contribute to better understanding of the role of alternative marketing arrangements, the extent of their use, reasons why firms enter into them, and their implications.

Since captive supplies, packer ownership, and other advance marketing arrangements are interrelated throughout the livestock and red meat

industries, we plan to study marketing methods from the farm level to the retail, export, and foodservice levels. The planned study will examine the use and economic effects of various methods for transferring cattle, hogs, lambs, and meat between successive stages of the livestock and meat marketing system. It will examine marketing arrangements from the first-producer (for example, cow-calf producers and hog farrowing operations) to the procurement of meat and meat products by retail establishments, exporters, and the hotel, restaurant, and institutional trades.

We established an interagency working group with representatives from USDA and other federal agencies to provide advice on the study. The working group includes representatives from the Office of the Chief Economist, Economic Research Service, Agricultural Marketing Service, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Office of Budget and Program Analysis, and Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration in USDA plus the Department of Justice, Federal Trade Commission, and Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

We believe that we have appropriately defined the scope and identified the research steps necessary to complete the study. We have identified 10 specific objectives for the study. We then grouped the 10 objectives into 5 parts or phases. Each part represents a unique block of work, usually involving common data collection requirements or similar types of analyses. Each part and its associated objectives are specified in the following table:

Part	Objective
Part 1: Identify and classify spot and alternative marketing arrangements into appropriate categories for examining alternative methods of vertical coordination.	Objective 1: Identify various spot and alternative arrangements for transferring livestock and meat between successive stages of the livestock and meat system from farmers to retailers, and classify the arrangements by type of marketing method.
Part 2: Survey firms to learn about the terms of various spot and alternative marketing arrangements and examine why firms use them.	Objective 2: Describe the terms of the arrangements (for example, written or oral, length of agreements, quantity requirements, which party controls delivery timing, how animal or meat quality is determined, how prices are determined when formulas are used, termination options, dispute resolution mechanisms, whether prices are reported to the Agricultural Marketing Service or other market news organization), and describe arrangements that cover more than two stages in the supply chain. Objective 3: Determine the availability of alternative marketing arrangements to market participants (for example, producers, feedyards, packers, distributors, retailers) of various sizes and in different geographic regions. Objective 4: Determine reasons why producers, feedlots, packers, distributors, and retailers enter into these spot and alternative marketing arrangements (for example, cost savings, risk reduction, access to financing, access to improved genetics, access to management expertise).

¹ GIPSA defines captive supplies as livestock that are owned or fed by a packer more than 14 days prior to slaughter; livestock that are procured by a

packer through a contract or marketing agreement that has been in place for more than 14 days prior to slaughter; and livestock that are otherwise

committed to a packer more than 14 days prior to slaughter.

Part	Objective
Part 3: Examine sales and procurement transactions records to measure the number of animals and quantity of meat traded through various spot and alternative marketing arrangements, examine price premiums and discounts associated with the different marketing methods, and examine short-run price effects of captive supplies.	Objective 5: Measure the extent to which alternative marketing arrangements are used in the cattle, hog, lamb, and meat industries. Objective 6: Examine price differences among spot and alternative marketing arrangements and the effects that alternative marketing arrangements have on spot market prices in the short run.
Part 4: Measure and compare costs and benefits associated with the various spot and alternative marketing methods.	Objective 7: Determine what effects spot and alternative marketing arrangements have on firms' operating costs and efficiency, animal and meat quality, level and distribution of risks among market participants, and consumer demand for livestock and meat. Measure potential size economies and their sources (for example, procurement costs, operating costs, selling costs, by type of resource, such as labor costs or capital costs).
Part 5: Summarize the findings of the four parts described above and address issues associated with price discovery, thin markets, long run effects on costs and prices, competitiveness with other meats, structural change, and market power dimensions.	Objective 8: Examine the implications of alternative marketing arrangements on price discovery in cattle, hog, lamb, and meat markets. Assess how prices are likely to be determined if spot markets become thinner as use of alternative marketing arrangements increases. Objective 9: Examine what effects spot and alternative marketing arrangements have on long run costs and prices, and their implications for competitiveness with other meats, structure of the livestock industry, and structure of the meatpacking industry. Objective 10: Examine the implications of spot and alternative marketing arrangements on barriers to entry, industry concentration, and other factors that have the potential to increase market power in livestock production, meatpacking, and retailing.

We request comments from interested persons on the plan for the study as outlined above.

We anticipate that both voluntary submissions of data and data collected under GIPSA's authorities will be required for the study. As the information collection requirements are identified, we will follow the standard procedure for notice, comment, and request for approval from the Office of Management and Budget.

We plan to enter into contract(s) for the performance of most of the work involved in the study. GIPSA, through USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, will solicit and award one or more contracts competitively for the study in accordance with Federal procurement procedures. Specifically, GIPSA plans to solicit research proposals through a formal request process. Individual contracts may cover several parts of the study. For example, one contract may cover cattle, another hogs, and a third sheep and lambs; or some other combination of the study's parts may be used. We anticipate that consulting firms and university departments of agricultural economics, economics, and business may have a particular interest in bidding on the work. Collaborative research relationships among institutions may be needed to assemble all of the expertise needed for different parts of the study.

We also intend to establish a five-to seven-member academic peer review group having outstanding research credentials in this area of research to review the researchers' technical work.

We request the public to submit names of highly qualified academicians to serve as peer reviewers.

Conclusion

GIPSA will use \$4.5 million dollars of its 2003 fiscal year budget appropriation to conduct a study of livestock and meat marketing, addressing issues "surrounding a ban on packer ownership" of livestock. Some economic studies have been conducted on the effects of captive supplies on spot market prices of fed cattle. These studies have shown a correlation between the captive supplies and lower spot market prices, but have not shown that the captive supplies cause lower prices. There has been little research on the effects of packer feeding and other alternative marketing arrangements of hogs or other types of livestock. A few studies have surveyed hog market participants to learn why they entered into alternative marketing arrangements. Studies have not examined the role of wholesalers and retailers in alternative marketing arrangements, nor such critical issues as the long-run effects of alternative marketing arrangements on prices, efficiencies, and other economic and market factors.

We intend to address these issues in the livestock and meat marketing study described in this Notice. The GIPSA study will serve several purposes:

- It will give producers better information on which to base their decisions about whether to participate in non-traditional marketing arrangements and, if so, which types of arrangements are best suited to their needs.

- It will contribute to better public understanding of the role of alternative marketing arrangements, the extent of their use, reasons why firms enter into them, and the implications of such arrangements.

- It will help identify emerging marketing information needs of livestock producers and other market participants.

- It will make an important contribution to USDA and Congress in deciding whether restrictions on use of captive supplies are warranted.

- It will assist GIPSA in enforcing the Packers and Stockyards Act by contributing to the Agency's understanding of changing marketing practices and by identifying areas that the Agency may need to include in its investigation plans.

To provide members of the livestock and meat marketing industries as well as other interested persons with an opportunity to comment on the study, we published this Notice in the **Federal Register**. We encourage all interested persons to submit comments on the plans for the study, including its scope and objectives, and methodology; submit names and contact information for highly qualified academicians to be peer reviewers; and submit names and contact information for organizations that may be interested in receiving information to bid on the study when we begin the procurement process.

Authority: Pub. L. 108-7, 117 Stat. 22.

Dated: May 27, 2003.

Donna Reifschneider,

Administrator, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

[FR Doc. 03-13517 Filed 5-29-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-EN-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Proposed Changes in the National Handbook of Conservation Practices

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the intention of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to issue a series of new or revised conservation practice standards in its National Handbook of Conservation Practices. These standards include: Access Road; Alley Cropping; Atmospheric Resource Quality Management; Cover Crop; Feed Management; Field Boarder; Filter Strip; Forest Site Preparation; Forest Stand Improvement; Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment; Heavy Use Area Protection; Herbaceous Wind Barriers; Manure Transfer; Nutrient Management; Pasture and Hayland Planting; Prescribed Grazing; Range Planting; Riparian Herbaceous Cover; Streambank and Shoreline Protection; Subsurface Drain; Vegetative Barrier; and Water Harvesting Catchment. These standards are used to convey national guidance in developing Field Office Technical Guide Standards used in the States and the Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas. NRCS State Conservationists and Directors for the Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas who choose to adopt these practices for use within their States/Areas will incorporate them into Section IV of their Field Office Technical Guide. These practices may be used in resource management systems that treat highly erodible land, or on land determined to be wetland.

EFFECTIVE DATES: Comments will be received for a 30-day period, starting on the date of this publication. This series of new or revised conservation practice standards will be adopted after the close of the 30-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.

The telephone number is (202) 720-5023. The standards are also available, and can be downloaded from the Internet at: <http://www.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/practicestds.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 revisions to conservation practice standards used to carry out the highly erodible land and wetland provisions of the law. For the next 30 days, NRCS will receive comments on the proposed changes. Following that period, a determination will be made by NRCS regarding disposition of those comments, and a final determination of change will be made.

Signed in Washington, DC, on May 15, 2003.

Bruce I. Knight,

Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

[FR Doc. 03-13548 Filed 5-29-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-P

COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED

Procurement List; Proposed Additions and Deletions

AGENCY: Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

ACTION: Proposed Additions to and Deletions from Procurement List.

SUMMARY: The Committee is proposing to add to the Procurement List products and a service to be furnished by nonprofit agencies employing persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities, and to delete services previously furnished by such agencies.

COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE: June 29, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, Jefferson Plaza 2, Suite 10800, 1421 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22202-3259.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sheryl D. Kennerly, (703) 603-7740.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice is published pursuant to 41 U.S.C 47(a) (2) and 41 CFR 51-2.3. Its purpose is to provide interested persons an

opportunity to submit comments on the proposed actions.

Additions

If the Committee approves the proposed additions, the entities of the Federal Government identified in this notice for each product or service will be required to procure the products and service listed below from nonprofit agencies employing persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

I certify that the following action will not have a significant impact on a substantial number of small entities. The major factors considered for this certification were:

1. If approved, the action will not result in any additional reporting, recordkeeping or other compliance requirements for small entities other than the small organizations that will furnish the products and service to the Government.

2. If approved, the action will result in authorizing small entities to furnish the products and service to the Government.

3. There are no known regulatory alternatives which would accomplish the objectives of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (41 U.S.C. 46-48c) in connection with the products and services proposed for addition to the Procurement List. Comments on this certification are invited. Commenters should identify the statement(s) underlying the certification on which they are providing additional information.

The following products and service are proposed for addition to Procurement List for production by the nonprofit agencies listed:

Products

Product/NSN: Antibacterial Wipe Shipper M.R. 90403

NPA: Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Contract Activity: Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA), Ft. Lee, Virginia

Product/NSN: Belt, Women's Cotton Web, Black with Gold Clip

8445-01-501-0232

NPA: Travis Association for the Blind, Austin, Texas

Contract Activity: Defense Supply Center Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Service

Service Type/Location: Janitorial/Custodial, U.S. Customs Service, 8855 NE Airport Way, Portland, Oregon

NPA: Portland Habilitation Center, Inc., Portland, Oregon

Contract Activity: U.S. Customs Service, Indianapolis, Indiana