

on the Board and other applications not received within the 30-day period after publication of this notice in the **Federal Register** will be considered for eligibility to nominate producers or importers for subsequent vacancies on the Board.

Only those organizations or associations which meet the criteria for certification of eligibility promulgated at 7 CFR § 1260.530 are eligible for certification. Those criteria are:

(a) For State organizations or associations:

(1) Total paid membership must be comprised of at least a majority of cattle producers or represent at least a majority of cattle producers in a State or unit,

(2) Membership must represent a substantial number of producers who produce a substantial number of cattle in such State or unit,

(3) There must be a history of stability and permanency, and

(4) There must be a primary or overriding purpose of promoting the economic welfare of cattle producers.

(b) For organizations or associations representing importers, the determination by USDA as to the eligibility of importer organizations or associations to nominate members to the Board shall be based on applications containing the following information:

(1) The number and type of members represented (*i.e.*, beef or cattle importers, etc.),

(2) Annual import volume in pounds of beef and beef products and/or the number of head of cattle,

(3) The stability and permanency of the importer organization or association,

(4) The number of years in existence, and

(5) The names of the countries of origin for cattle, beef, or beef products imported.

All certified organizations and associations, including those that were previously certified in the States or units having vacant positions on the Board, will be notified simultaneously in writing of the beginning and ending dates of the established nomination period and will be provided with required nomination forms and background information sheets.

The names of qualified nominees received by the established due date will be submitted to USDA for consideration as appointees to the Board.

The information collection requirements referenced in this notice have been previously approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the provisions of 44 U.S.C., Chapter 35 and have been

assigned OMB No. 0581-0093, except Board member nominee information sheets are assigned OMB No. 0505-0001.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 2901 *et seq.*

Dated: December 4, 2003.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 03-30604 Filed 12-9-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket Number FV-04-303]

United States Standards for Grades of Field Grown Leaf Lettuce

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), prior to undertaking research and other work associated with creating an official grade standard, is soliciting comments on the petition to create the United States Standards for Grades of Field Grown Leaf Lettuce. At a recent meeting of the Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee, AMS was asked to review all the fresh fruit and vegetable grade standards for usefulness in serving the industry and identify commodities that may be better served if a grade standard was developed. As a result, AMS has noted that the industry is interested in the creation of standards for field grown leaf lettuce.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 9, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to the Standardization Section, Fresh Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Room 1661 South Building, Stop 0240, Washington, DC 20250-0240, fax (202) 720-8871, E-mail

FPB.DocketClerk@usda.gov. Comments should make reference to the dates and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register** and will be made available for public inspection in the above office during regular business hours.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David L. Priester, at the above address or call (202) 720-2185, e-mail *David.Priester@usda.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: At a recent meeting of the Fruit and

Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee, AMS was asked to review all the fresh fruit and vegetable grade standards for usefulness in serving the industry and to identify commodities that may be better served if a grade standard was developed. AMS has identified field grown leaf lettuce as a possible commodity for development of United States Standards for Grades of Field Grown Leaf Lettuce. Currently, there are U.S. Standards for Grades of Greenhouse Leaf Lettuce, but no standards for leaf lettuce grown in open fields. When requested to inspect field grown leaf lettuce, the greenhouse leaf lettuce standards may be used as a reference, but cannot be used for grade determination.

A new standard for leaf lettuce grown in open fields could contain sections pertaining to grades, tolerances, application of tolerances, pack requirements, definitions, and other relevant and necessary provisions. Prior to undertaking detailed work to develop the proposed standards for field grown leaf lettuce, AMS is soliciting comments on the possible development of the standards for grades of field green leaf lettuce and the probable impact on distributors, processors, and growers.

This notice provides for a 60-day comment period for interested parties to comment on the development of the standards. Should AMS conclude that there is a need for the development of the standards, the proposed standards will be published in the **Federal Register** with a request for comments in accordance with 7 CFR part 36.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.

Dated: December 4, 2003.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 03-30603 Filed 12-9-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. No. FV-04-328]

United States Standards for Grades of Frozen Celery

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) is establishing the United States Standards for Grades of Frozen Celery. USDA received a petition from a grower and a processor of celery

to create grade standards for frozen celery that will include a description of the product, style, sample unit size, grades, ascertaining the grade by sample, and ascertaining the grade by lot. The standard is intended to provide a common language for trade, and a means of measuring value in the marketing of frozen celery.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 9, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Karen L. Kaufman, Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 0247, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250-0247; fax (202) 690-1087; or e-mail karen.kaufman@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 203(c) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627), as amended, directs and authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture "to develop and improve standards of quality, condition, quantity, grade, and packaging, and recommend and demonstrate such standards in order to encourage uniformity and consistency in commercial practices * * *." AMS is committed to carrying out this authority in a manner that facilitates the marketing of agricultural commodities and makes copies of official standards available upon request. The United States Standards for Grades of Fruits and Vegetables are maintained by USDA/AMS/Fruit and Vegetable Programs and may be obtained by writing to the above address or on the internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/standards/standpfv.htm>.

AMS is establishing the U.S. Standards for Grades of Frozen Celery using the procedures that appear in part 36 of title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR part 36).

Proposed by the Petitioner

The petitioner, a grower and a processor of celery, requested that USDA develop a standard for frozen celery to be used by the industry. The petitioner provided information on style, sample size and description to AMS to develop the standard. AMS visited the petitioner's facility to collect information on grades of frozen celery and how to ascertain the grade of a sample and of a lot.

AMS prepared a discussion draft of the frozen celery standard, and distributed copies for input to the petitioner, the American Frozen Food Institute (AFFI), and the National Food Processors Association (NFPA). Input from the above groups was used to develop the standard.

Proposed by Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS

The first notice proposing to create a new United States Standards for Grades of Frozen Celery was published based on the petition in the May 2, 2001 **Federal Register**. A second notice was published in the February 20, 2003 **Federal Register** (68 FR 8196) based on comments received from the first notice. AMS received three comments in response to the second notice. All of the responses were in favor of the new standard. These comments are available by accessing AMS's Home Page on the Internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/ppb.html>.

Based on recommendations from the commentors the following changes were made to the standard, add "Bias sliced celery" to Section 2.6681. Styles of frozen celery. (a) Sliced celery; changes to Table I—Allowances for Defects in Frozen Celery include the addition of "bias sliced" celery with "sliced" style; for blemished and seriously blemished units no unit larger than a 1/4", for insect damage no larger than 1/8"; for grades of "sliced", "bias" and "diced" style: blemished Grade "A" maximum of 3% by weight, Grade "B" maximum of 4% by weight, seriously blemished Grade "A" maximum of 1% by weight, Grade "B" maximum of 2% by weight, for mechanical damage, crushed or broken units for Grade "B" no more than 3% by weight and "sliced" and "bias" style extraneous vegetable material allowed in Grade "A" one piece, and Grade "B" two pieces.

Accordingly, AMS is establishing the United States Standard for Grades of Frozen Celery. The U.S. Standards for Grades of Frozen Celery following the standard format for U.S. Grade Standards. AMS is establishing the definition of "frozen celery" and including "sliced", "bias" and "diced" as the style designations in the standard. Finally, this standard defines the quality factors that affect frozen celery and determine sample unit sizes for this commodity.

This standard establishes the grade levels "A", "B" and "Substandard" and assigns the corresponding score points for each level. The tolerance for each quality factor as defined for each grade level is established.

The grade of a sample unit of frozen celery will be ascertained by considering the factors of varietal characteristics flavor and odor, which are not scored; the ratings for the factors of color, defects, and character, which are scored; the total score; and the limiting rules which apply. This standard will provide a common

language for trade, a means of measuring value in the marketing of frozen celery, and provide guidance in the effective utilization of frozen celery. The official grade of a lot of frozen celery covered by these standards will be determined by the procedures set forth in the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Processed Products Thereof, and Certain Other Processed Food Products (§ 52.1 to 52.83).

The U.S. Standards for Grades of Frozen Celery will become effective 30 days after publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.

Dated: December 4, 2003.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 03-30605 Filed 12-9-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket Number FV-04-301]

United States Standards for Grades of Greenhouse Tomatoes

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), prior to undertaking research and other work associated with revising official grade standards, is soliciting comments on the petition to revise the United States Standards for Grades of Greenhouse Tomatoes. At a recent meeting of the Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee, AMS was asked to review all fresh fruit and vegetable grade standards for usefulness in serving the industry. As a result, AMS has noted that the method for determining percentages of defects and size classifications for greenhouse tomatoes needs to be revised to stay in line with current marketing practices. Additionally, AMS is seeking comments regarding any other revisions that may be necessary to better serve the industry.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 9, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to the Standardization Section, Fresh Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Room 1661, South Building, Stop 0240, Washington, DC 20250-0240; fax (202)