

budgets; and making funds available for such programs when approved. The objective of the Cotton Research and Promotion Program is to strengthen cotton's competitive position and to maintain and expand domestic and foreign markets and uses for cotton. The Cotton Board is prohibited from participating in any matters influencing governmental policies or action except making recommendations for amendments to the Order.

Amendments to the Act were enacted under subtitle G of title XIX of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-624, 104 Stat. 3909, November 28, 1990). These amendments provided for: (1) Importer representation on the Cotton Board; (2) the assessment of imported cotton and cotton products; (3) increasing the amount the Secretary of Agriculture can be reimbursed for conduct of a referendum from \$200,000 to \$300,000; (4) reimbursing government agencies who assist in administering the collection of assessments on imported cotton and cotton products; and (5) terminating the right of a producer to demand a refund of assessments. The Act Amendments of 1990 were approved by a majority (60 percent) of importers and producers of cotton voting in a referendum conducted July 17-26, 1991, as required by the Act. Results of this referendum were announced in a nationally distributed press release dated August 2, 1991.

The Cotton Research and Promotion Act Amendment of 1990, Section 8(c)(1) provides that once every 5 years after the July 1991 referendum, the Secretary of Agriculture is to conduct a review to ascertain whether a referendum is needed. In such a referendum, producers and importers would determine whether they favor continuation of the amendments to the Order provided for in the Cotton Research and Promotion Act Amendments of 1990. These amendments to the Order were promulgated in final rules published in the **Federal Register** on December 10, 1991 (56 FR 64470), corrected at 56 FR 66670.

The results of the most recent review report of the Cotton Research and Promotion Program were issued on May 29, 2013. USDA announced its view (78 FR 32228) not to conduct a referendum regarding the 1991 amendments to the Order. In accordance with Section 8(c)(2) of the Act, USDA provided an opportunity for all eligible persons to request a continuance referendum on the 1991 amendments by making such a request during a sign-up period. During the period of August 3-August

14, 2015, the Department conducted a sign-up period for all eligible persons to request a continuance referendum on the 1990 Act amendments. The announced results of the sign-up period (80 FR 76654) did not meet the criteria established for a continuance referendum by the Cotton Research and Promotion Act and therefore, a referendum was not conducted.

In 2017, in accordance with the provisions of the Act, the Secretary of Agriculture will conduct its review of the Cotton Research and Promotion Program Act amendments to ascertain whether a referendum is needed to determine whether producers and importers support continuation of the amendments to the Order, as provided for by the 1990 Act amendments. The Secretary of Agriculture will make a public announcement of the results of the review. Pursuant to the Act, if the Secretary of Agriculture determines that a referendum is needed, the Secretary of Agriculture will conduct the referendum within 12 months after a public announcement of the determination to conduct the referendum.

If the Secretary determines that a referendum is not warranted, a sign-up period to request such a referendum will be made available to cotton producers and importers. A referendum will be held if requested by 10 percent or more of those voting in the most recent referendum as long as not more than 20 percent are from any one State or importers of cotton. This sign-up period would be announced in the **Federal Register**. A 60-day comment period is provided for interested persons to provide comments to be used by USDA in its review. All interested persons are invited to submit written comments.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 2101-2118.

Dated: February 21, 2017.

Bruce Summers,

Acting Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

Increase in Fiscal Year 2017 Specialty Sugar Tariff-Rate Quota

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Office of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (the Secretary) is providing notice of an

increase in the fiscal year (FY) 2017 specialty sugar tariff-rate quota (TRQ) of 40,000 metric tons raw value (MTRV).

DATES: *Effective Date:* February 27, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Souleymane Diaby, Import Policies and Export Reporting Division, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., AgStop 1021, Washington, DC 20250-1021; by telephone (202) 720-2916; by fax (202) 720-0876; or by email to Souleymane.Diaby@fas.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On May 6, 2016, USDA announced the establishment of the in-quota quantity of the FY 2017 refined sugar TRQ at 162,000 MTRV for which the sucrose content, by weight in the dry state, must have a polarimeter reading of 99.5 degrees or more (81 FR 27390, May 6, 2016). This amount included the minimum level to which the United States is committed under the WTO Uruguay Round Agreements (22,000 MTRV of which 1,656 MTRV is reserved for specialty sugar) and an additional 140,000 MTRV reserved for specialty sugars.

Pursuant to Additional U.S. Note 5 to Chapter 17 of the U.S. Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) and Section 359k of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, as amended, the Secretary today increased the overall FY 2017 refined sugar TRQ by 40,000 MTRV to 202,000 MTRV. The increased amount is reserved for specialty sugar. Entry of this sugar will be permitted beginning March 1, 2017. The sugar entered under this tariff-rate quota is reserved for organic sugar and other specialty sugars not currently produced commercially in the United States or reasonably available from domestic sources.

Dated: February 7, 2017.

Jason Hafemeister,

Acting Deputy Under Secretary, Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services.

[FR Doc. 2017-03826 Filed 2-24-17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

February 22, 2017.

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 are requested regarding (1) whether the collection of information is necessary