

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Foreign Agricultural Service****7 CFR Part 1580**

RIN 0551-AA66

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers**AGENCY:** Foreign Agricultural Service.**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: This proposed rule would implement Chapter 6 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended by Subtitle C of Title 1 of the Trade Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-210) to establish a new program, Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers. Under this program, the Department of Agriculture would provide technical assistance and cash benefits to eligible producers of raw agricultural commodities when the Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) determines that increased imports have contributed importantly to a specific price decline over five preceding marketing years. The proposed rule would establish the procedure by which producers of raw agricultural commodities can petition for certification of eligibility and apply for technical assistance and adjustment payments.

DATES: Comments should be received on or before May 23, 2003, to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be mailed or delivered to Jean-Louis Pajot, Import Policies and Programs Division, Foreign Agricultural Service, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 1021, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250-1021. Comments may also be e-mailed to *Jean-Louis.Pajot@usda.gov*. Comments received may be inspected between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. at room 5541-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jean-Louis Pajot at the address above, or telephone at (202) 720-2916, or e-mail at *Jean-Louis.Pajot@usda.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Executive Order 12866**

The proposed rule has been determined to be significant under E.O. 12866 and has been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act ensures that regulatory and information requirements are tailored to the size and nature of small businesses, small

organizations, and small governmental jurisdictions. This proposed rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small farm operations. Participation in the program is voluntary. Direct and indirect costs are likely to be very small as a percentage of revenue and in terms of absolute costs. The minimal regulatory requirements impact large and small businesses equally, and the program's benefits should improve cash flow and liquidity for farmers participating in the program.

Paperwork Reduction Act

Summary: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Department intends to request approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of an information collection required to support the proposed rule establishing an adjustment assistance program for farmers. Copies of the information collection may be obtained from Kimberly Chisley, the Agency Information Collection Coordinator, at (202) 720-2568 or e-mail at *Chisley@fas.usda.gov*.

To obtain program benefits, under this program, a group of raw agricultural commodity producers, or their duly authorized representative, must submit a petition to the Administrator for certification of eligibility to apply for adjustment assistance. The proposed rule contains an information collection that solicits data that is essential for the Administrator in making a determination on certification of eligibility for adjustment assistance. The information collection requires, to the maximum extent feasible, that a petition contain: A description of the raw agricultural product concerned; data on specific prices for the most recent marketing year; national average or regional prices for the commodity for the five preceding marketing years; data on increases in imports of a directly competing commodity; and an assessment of the impact of increased imports on domestic prices, including any supporting evidence that imports contributed importantly to a decline in domestic prices. Within 90 days after certification, a producer may submit an application for adjustment assistance benefits. The application contains an information collection that conforms to the requirements of section 296 regarding conditions that must be met to qualify for cash benefits. The application requires submission of: Standard business information; the quantity of production in the year covered by the certification accompanied by supporting

documentation; data on gross income and net farm income accompanied by supporting documentation; certification that an applicant has not received other cash benefits; and certification that an applicant has obtained information and technical assistance from the Extension Service to assist the applicant in adjusting to import competition.

Estimate of the Burden: The average estimated public reporting burden is 14 hours.

Respondents: Groups of farmers of raw agricultural commodities or their duly authorized representatives.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 500.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 7,000 hours.

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

Requests for comments: Comments are invited on: (a) 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; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, or any other aspect of this collection of information. Comments on issues covered by the Paperwork Reduction Act must be submitted within 30 days of publication to be assured of consideration. Comments may be sent to Jean-Louis Pajot, Import Policies and Program Division, FAS, 1400 Independence Avenue, Stop 1021, SW., Washington, DC 20520-1021. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also be a matter of public record. Persons with disabilities who require an alternative means for communication of information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

FAS is committed to compliance with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA), which requires Government agencies, in general, to provide the public the option of submitting information or transacting business

electronically to maximum extent possible. Electronic submission of the information collection will be implemented before October 2003 in compliance with the GPEA. The Department will request OMB approval of forms that are being developed for electronic submission of the information collection, and issue a **Federal Register** notice soliciting public comments on the requested revision of the information collection to provide for submission of the information collection on electronic forms. All public comments received will be considered prior to implementation of an electronic reporting system, and will also become a matter of public record. Copies of that information collection will be made available from Kimberly Chisley, the Agency Information Collection Coordinator, at (202) 720-2568 or e-mail at Chisley@fas.usda.gov.

Executive Order 12988

This proposed rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988. The provisions of this proposed rule would not have preemptive effect with respect to any State or local laws, regulations, or policies which conflict with such provision or which otherwise impede their full implementation. The proposed rule would not have retroactive effect. Before any judicial action may be brought regarding this rule, all administrative remedies must be exhausted.

National Environmental Policy Act

The Administrator has determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, neither an Environmental Assessment nor an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary for this proposed rule.

Executive Orders 12372, 13083 and 13084, and the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (Pub. L. 104-4)

These Executive Orders and Pub. L. 104-4 require consultation with State and local officials and Indian tribal governments. This proposed rule does not impose an unfunded mandate or any other requirement on State, local or tribal governments. Accordingly, these programs are not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, Executive Order 13083, and Executive Order 13084, or the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

Executive Order 12630

This Order requires careful evaluation of governmental actions that interfere with constitutionally protected property rights. This proposed rule would not

interfere with any property rights and, therefore, does not need to be evaluated on the basis of the criteria outlined in Executive Order 12630.

Background

The Trade Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-210) amended the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2551, *et seq.*) to add a new chapter 6, which establishes a program of trade adjustment assistance for farmers, providing both technical assistance and cash benefits to producers. The statute authorizes an appropriation of not more than \$90 million for each fiscal year 2003 through 2007 to carry out the program.

Under this proposed rule, a group of agricultural commodity producers may petition the Administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) for trade adjustment assistance from mid-August through the end of January. FAS will first review the petition for appropriateness, completeness, and timeliness, before publishing a notice in the **Federal Register** that it has been received. The Economic Research Service (ERS) will then conduct a market study to verify the decline in producer prices, and to assess possible causes, taking due account of any special factors which may have affected prices of the articles concerned, including imports, exports, production, changes in consumer preferences, weather conditions, diseases, and other relevant issues. ERS will report its findings to the FAS Administrator, who will then determine whether or not the group is eligible for trade adjustment assistance. If the national average price in the most recent marketing year for the commodity produced by the group is equal to or less than 80 percent of the average of the national average prices in the preceding 5 marketing years and that increases in imports of that commodity contributed importantly to the decline in price, the Administrator will certify the group as eligible for trade adjustment assistance.

Upon certification, producers have 90 days to contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to apply for assistance. As soon as they apply, they are eligible to receive at no cost a technical assistance package specifically tailored for their needs by the Extension Service. Depending on the commodity and the region, the Extension Service package may include technical publications in print or on-line, group seminars and presentations, and one-on-one meetings. Producers, who receive the technical assistance and also satisfy personal and farm income limits, are eligible for TAA payments. If the funding authorized by Congress is insufficient to pay 100

percent of all TAA claims during the fiscal year, payments will be prorated and issued after June 15, the last possible date for producers to file a TAA application.

Producers may petition for adjustment assistance in subsequent years. Petitions will be reviewed and approved if prices remain at or below the same 80 percent threshold as the initial year of adjustment assistance, and if imports have continued to increase and contributed importantly to the decline in prices.

The Department invites comments on all aspects of the proposed rule including: Eligibility requirements, including the coverage of aquaculture; unintended market consequences of the program to producers, importers, buyers and consumers; timing and prorating of adjustment payments when funding may be insufficient; petitions on behalf of producers within regions of the United States; marketing periods of less than 12 months; and less restrictive alternatives to the proposed rule that would address the intent of the program.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 1580

Agricultural commodities, Imports, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Trade adjustment assistance.

Proposed Rule

Accordingly, it is proposed to amend title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations by adding a new part 1580, to read as follows:

PART 1580—TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FOR FARMERS

- Sec.
- 1580.101 General statement.
- 1580.102 Definitions.
- 1580.201 Petitions for trade adjustment assistance.
- 1580.202 Hearings, petition reviews, and amendments.
- 1580.203 Determination of eligibility and certification by the Administrator.
- 1580.301 Application for adjustment assistance.
- 1580.302 Technical assistance and services.
- 1580.303 Adjustment assistance payments.
- 1580.401 Subsequent qualifying year eligibility.
- 1580.501 Administration.
- 1580.502 Maintenance of records, audits and compliance.
- 1580.503 Debarment and suspension.
- 1580.504 Fraud and recovery of overpayments.
- 1580.505 Appeals.
- 1580.601 Implementation.
- 1580.602 Paperwork Reduction Act assigned number.

Authority: 19 Sec. U.S.C. 2401.

§ 1580.101 General statement.

This part provides regulations for the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers program. Under these provisions, producers of agricultural commodities may petition the Department of Agriculture for eligibility to apply for trade adjustment assistance based on criteria set forth in the Trade Act of 1974, as amended by the Trade Act of 2002 (19 U.S.C. 2251, *et seq.*). If the Administrator determines that the national average price for a commodity is less than 80 percent of the preceding 5-year average and that an increase in imports has contributed importantly to the decline in commodity prices, the producers may apply for technical assistance and cash benefits under the program.

§ 1580.102 Definitions.

As used in the part, the following terms mean:

Adjusted gross income means income as defined in 7 CFR 1400.601.

Administrator means the Administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

Agricultural commodity means any commodity in its raw or natural state found in chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 23, 24, 41, 51, and 52 of the *Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States* (HTS), and chapter 3 of the HTS with respect to aquaculture products.

Articles like or directly competitive generally means products falling under the same HTS number used to identify the agricultural commodity in the petition. A *like* product means substantially identical in inherent or intrinsic characteristics, and the term *directly competitive* means those articles which are substantially equivalent for commercial purposes, that is, are adapted to the same uses and are essentially interchangeable therefore.

Authorized representative means an association of agricultural commodity producers.

Certification date means the date on which the Administrator announces in the **Federal Register** or by Department news release, whichever comes first, a certification of eligibility to apply for adjustment assistance.

Contributed importantly means a cause which is important, but not necessarily more important than any other cause.

Department means the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Deputy Administrator means the Deputy Administrator of the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Extension Service means the Cooperative State Research, Education,

and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Family member means an individual to whom a person is related as spouse, lineal ancestor, lineal descendent, or sibling, including:

- (1) Great grandparent;
- (2) Grandparent;
- (3) Parent;
- (4) Child, including legally adopted children;
- (5) Great grandchildren;
- (6) Sibling of the family member in the farming operation; and
- (7) Spouse of a person listed in paragraphs (1) through (6) of this definition.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) means the Farm Service Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Filing date means the date that a notice of petition is published in the **Federal Register**.

Group of producers means three or more producers who are not members of the same family.

Impacted area means one or more States of the United States.

Marketing year means the marketing season or year as defined by National Agriculture Statistic Service (NASS), or a specific period as proposed by the petitioners and certified by the Administrator.

National average price means the average price paid to producers for an agricultural commodity in a marketing year as determined by the Administrator.

Net farm income means net farm profit or loss reported on Internal Revenue Service Schedule F (Form 1040) and Form 4835 for the year that most closely corresponds with the marketing year under consideration.

Person means an individual, partnership, joint stock owner, corporation, association, trust, estate, or any other legal entity as defined in 7 CFR 1400.3.

Producer means a person who is an owner, operator, landlord, tenant, or sharecropper, who shares in the risk of producing a crop and who is entitled to share in the crop available for marketing from the farm.

Raw or natural state means unaltered by any process other than cleaning, grading, coating, sorting, trimming, mixing, conditioning, drying, dehulling, shelling, chilling, cooling, blanching or fumigating.

United States means the 50 States of the United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

§ 1580.201 Petitions for trade adjustment assistance.

(a) A group of agricultural commodity producers in the United States or their

authorized representative may file a petition for trade adjustment assistance.

(b) Filings may be written or electronic, as provided for by the Administrator, and submitted to FAS from August 17 through January 31. FAS shall not accept a petition received after January 31 but will return it to the sender. If January 31 falls on a weekend, the petition will be accepted the next business day.

(c) Petitions shall include the following information.

(1) Name, business address, phone number, and email address (if available) of each producer in the group, or their authorized representative. A petition filed by a group shall identify a contact person for the group.

(2) The agricultural commodity and its Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS) number.

(3) The production area represented by the group or its authorized representative. The petitioners shall indicate if they are filing on behalf of all producers in the United States, or if they are filing solely on behalf of producers in a specifically identified impacted area. In the latter case, at least one member of the group must reside in each State within the impacted area, or the authorized representative must have members residing in each State within the impacted area.

(4) The beginning and ending dates for the marketing year during which domestic prices were affected by imports. A petition may be filed for only the most recent marketing year for which national average prices are available.

(5) A justification statement explaining why the petitioners should be considered eligible for adjustment assistance.

(6) Price data supporting the petition.

(i) If the petition is filed on behalf of all producers of the agricultural commodity in the United States, the Administrator shall use national average prices compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), whenever possible. If NASS does not compile price data for the commodity, the petitioners shall provide national average prices for the marketing year under review and for the previous five marketing years, and identify the source of the price series.

(ii) If the petition is filed on behalf of producers in a specifically identified impacted area, the petitioners shall provide national average prices for the impacted area for the marketing year under review and for the previous five marketing years, and identify the source of the price series.

(iii) The Administrator may request petitioners to provide records to support their national average price data.

(d) Once the petition is filed, the Administrator shall determine if it meets the requirements of § 1580.201(c), and if so, publish notice in the **Federal Register** that a petition has been received and that an investigation has begun. The notice shall identify the agricultural commodity, including any like or directly competitive commodities, the marketing year being investigated, the price series being used, and the production area covered by the petition. If the petition does not meet the requirements of § 1580.201(c), the Administrator shall notify as soon as possible the contact person for the group or the authorized representative of the deficiencies.

§ 1580.202 Hearings, petition reviews, and amendments.

(a) If the petitioner, or any other person(s) found by the Administrator to have a substantial interest in the proceedings, submits not later than 10 days after the filing date a request for a hearing, the Administrator shall provide for a public hearing and afford such interested person an opportunity to be present, to produce evidence, and to be heard.

(b) If the petitioner, or any other person(s) having an interest in the proceedings takes issue with any of the information published in the **Federal Register** concerning the petition, they may submit to the Administrator their comments in writing or electronically for consideration by the Administrator not later than 10 days after the filing date.

(c) A producer residing outside the impacted area identified in a petition may file to become a party to the petition by fulfilling the requirements of § 1580.201(c) within 10 days of the filing date. The Administrator may amend the original petition to expand the impacted area and include the additional filer, or consider it a separate filing.

(d) The Administrator shall publish in the **Federal Register** as soon as possible any changes to the original notice resulting from any actions taken under this section.

§ 1580.203 Determination of eligibility and certification by the Administrator.

(a) As soon as practicable after the filing date, but in any event not later than 40 days after that date, the Administrator shall determine whether the petitioners satisfy the following conditions for adjustment assistance.

(1) The national average price for the agricultural commodity for the marketing year under review is equal to or less than 80 percent of the average of the national average prices for the 5 marketing years preceding the most recent marketing year, and

(2) Increases in imports of articles like or directly competitive with the agricultural commodity contributed importantly to the decline in price described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(b) If the Administrator determines that the above conditions have been satisfied, the producers covered by the petition shall be certified as eligible for adjustment assistance.

(c) Upon making a determination, whether affirmative or negative, the Administrator shall promptly publish in the **Federal Register** a summary of the determination, together with the reasons for making the determination.

(d) In addition, the Administrator shall notify producers covered by a certification how to apply for adjustment assistance. Notification methods may include direct mailings to known producers, messages to directly affected producer groups and organizations, electronic communications, internet web site notices, and use of broadcast and print media.

(e) Whenever a group of agricultural producers is certified as eligible for assistance, the Administrator shall use the occasion to notify and inform other producers about the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program and how they may petition for adjustment assistance.

§ 1580.301 Application for trade adjustment assistance.

(a) Only producers covered by a certification of eligibility may apply for adjustment assistance. Producers may request advice from FSA regarding the preparation and submission of their applications.

(b) An eligible producer may submit an application for adjustment assistance at any time after the certification date but not later than 90 days after the certification date. If the 90-day application period ends on a weekend or legal holiday, the producer may apply the following business day.

(c) Applications shall include:

(1) The name and legal address of applicant.

(2) Contact information, *i.e.*, mailing address, phone and email address.

(3) The producer's identification number or Federal Income Tax number.

(4) The amount of the agricultural commodity produced in the most recent marketing year supported by documentation acceptable to FSA.

(d) Upon submitting their application, producers shall be immediately eligible to request trade adjustment technical assistance from the Extension Service at no cost.

(e) Producers able to furnish their applications with all the following certifications shall be eligible for adjustment assistance payments:

(1) Certification that technical assistance from the Extension Service under § 1580.302 has been received.

(2) Certification that cash benefits have not been received under any of the provisions of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, other than those permitted under this part.

(3) Certification that adjustment assistance payments have not exceeded the \$10,000 limitation for the Federal fiscal year.

(4) Certification that net farm income is less than that for the latest year in which no adjustment assistance payment was received.

(5) Certification that their average adjusted gross income, as determined in accordance with 7 CFR 1400.601, for the 3 preceding taxable years does not exceed \$2,500,000.

(6) To comply with certifications in paragraphs (e)(4) and (5) of this section, an applicant shall provide either—

(i) Supporting documentation from a certified public accountant or attorney, or

(ii) Relevant documentation and other supporting financial data, such as financial statements, balance sheets, and reports prepared for or provided to the Internal Revenue Service or another U.S. Government agency.

(f) Persons legally authorized to execute program documents for estates or trusts will be accepted only if such person furnishes evidence of the authority to execute such documents.

§ 1580.302 Technical assistance and services.

(a) Any producer of an agricultural commodity covered by a certification of eligibility may apply for and receive information and technical assistance from the Extension Service that will assist in adjusting to import competition and be at no cost to the producer.

(b) To qualify for technical assistance, producers shall apply under § 1580.301.

(c) Producers shall have an opportunity to meet at least once with an Extension Service employee within 180 days of petition certification to receive information regarding the feasibility and desirability of substituting one or more alternative commodities for the adversely affected agricultural commodity and to receive technical assistance to lower costs

associated with producing and marketing the adversely affected agricultural commodity. The Extension Service shall provide to producers written confirmation of all technical assistance meetings. Producers shall also have access to technical information provided in writing and electronically.

(d) Producers shall also be provided information concerning procedures for applying for and receiving other Federal assistance and services available to workers facing economic distress.

(e) Producers shall be entitled to employment services and training benefits under trade adjustment assistance for workers managed by the U.S. Department of Labor.

§ 1580.303 Adjustment assistance payments.

(a) Applicants shall satisfy by September 30 all conditions of § 1580.301 to qualify for adjustment assistance payments.

(b) The FSA office shall issue a payment to a producer that is equal to the product of the amount of the agricultural commodity produced in the most recent marketing year multiplied by one-half the difference between—

(1) An amount equal to 80 percent of the average of the national average prices of the agricultural commodity covered by the petition for the 5 marketing years preceding the most recent marketing year, and

(2) The national average price of the agricultural commodity for the most recent marketing year.

(c) The maximum amount of payments under this part that a producer may receive in any 12-month period shall not exceed \$10,000.

(d) The total amount of payments made to a producer may not exceed during any crop year the limitation on counter-cyclical payments set forth in section 1001(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308(c)).

(e) Any person who may be entitled to a payment may assign their rights to such payment in accordance with 7 CFR part 1404 or successor regulations as designated by the Department.

(f) In the case of death, incompetency, disappearance or dissolution of a person that is eligible to receive benefits in accordance with this part, such person or persons specified in 7 CFR part 707 may receive such benefits, as determined appropriate by FSA.

(g) If the Administrator, FAS, determines in September that program funds may be insufficient to meet the requirements for adjustment assistance payments under this part during the coming fiscal year, FSA may suspend

adjustment payments until June 16 in order to prorate amounts owed producers.

(h) FSA will not make adjustment assistance payments to producers who have not satisfied the technical assistance requirement.

§ 1580.401 Subsequent qualifying year eligibility.

(a) Prior to the anniversary of a certification date,

(1) Groups and authorized representatives that provided national average prices to justify their initial certifications shall provide the Administrator national average prices for the most recent marketing year, and

(2) The Administrator shall determine whether or not—

(i) The national average price for the agricultural commodity produced by the group for the most recent marketing year is equal to or less than 80 percent of the average of national average prices for the 5 marketing years used to make the first certification under § 1580.203(a)(1), and

(ii) Further increases in imports are contributing importantly to the decline in price.

(b) The Administrator shall promptly publish in the **Federal Register** the determination with supporting justification statement.

(c) In the case of a re-certification, FSA shall notify producers that they may be eligible to receive trade adjustment assistance for a subsequent qualifying year.

(d) To qualify for assistance in subsequent qualifying years, producers shall—

(1) Submit an application pursuant to § 1580.301, and

(2) Contact the Extension Service for technical adjustment assistance.

(e) The amount of an adjustment assistance payment during a qualifying year shall be determined in the same manner as in the originating year, except that the average national price shall be determined by using the 5-marketing-year period used to determine the amount of cash benefits for the first certification.

(f) An eligible producer who did not apply for adjustment assistance in the initial year may apply pursuant to § 1580.301.

§ 1580.501 Administration.

(a) The application process will be administered under the general supervision of the Administrator, FSA, and shall be carried out in the field by State and county FSA committees.

(b) State and county FSA committees and representatives do not have the

authority to modify or waive any of the provisions of this part.

(c) The State FSA committee shall take any action required by this part that has not been taken by a county FSA committee. The State FSA committee shall also:

(1) Correct or require a county FSA committee to correct any action taken by such county FSA committee that is not in accordance with this part; and

(2) Require a county FSA committee to withhold taking or reversing any action that is not in accordance with this part.

(d) No delegation in this part to a State or county FSA committee shall prevent the Deputy Administrator from determining any question arising under the program or from reversing or modifying any determination made by a State or county FSA committee.

(e) The Deputy Administrator may authorize the State and county committees to waive or modify non-statutory deadlines or other program requirements in cases where lateness or failure to meet such other requirements does not adversely affect the operation of the program.

§ 1580.502 Maintenance of records, audits and compliance.

(a) Persons making application for benefits under this program must maintain accurate records and accounts that will document that they meet all eligibility requirements specified herein, as may be requested by FSA. Such records and accounts must be retained for 2 years after the date of the final payment to the producer under this program.

(b) At all times during regular business hours, authorized representatives of FSA, the United States Department of Agriculture, or the Comptroller General of the United States shall have access to the premises of the producer in order to inspect, examine, and make copies of the books, records, and accounts, and other written data as specified in paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) Audits of certifications of average adjusted gross income may be conducted as necessary to determine compliance with the requirements of this subpart. As a part of this audit, income tax forms may be requested and if requested, must be supplied. If a producer has submitted information to FSA, including a certification from a certified public accountant or attorney, that relied upon information from a form previously filed with the Internal Revenue Service, such producer shall provide FSA a copy of any amended

form filed with the Internal Revenue Service with 30 days of the filing.

(d) If requested in writing by FSA, the United States Department of Agriculture, or the Comptroller General of the United States, the producer shall provide all information and documentation the reviewing authority determines necessary to verify any information or certification provided under this subpart, including all documents referred to in § 1580.301(c), within 30 days. Acceptable production documentation may be submitted by facsimile, in person, or by mail and may include copies of receipts, ledgers, income statements, deposit slips, register tapes, invoices for custom harvesting, records to verify production costs, contemporaneous measurements, truck scale tickets, and contemporaneous diaries that are determined acceptable by the county committee. Failure to provide necessary and accurate information to verify compliance, or failure to comply with this subpart's requirements, will result in ineligibility for all program benefits subject to this subpart for the year or years subject to the request.

(e) All information provided to FSA for the purposes of determining compliance with this part will remain confidential and not be subject to any request submitted under the Freedom of Information Act.

§ 1580.503 Debarment and suspension.

The Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) regulations and Government Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants), 7 CFR part 3017—subparts A through E, apply to this part.

§ 1580.504 Fraud and recovery of overpayments.

(a) If the Administrator, FSA or a court of competent jurisdiction, determines that any person has received any payment under this program to which the person was not entitled, such person will be liable to repay such amount to the Administrator, FSA. The Administrator, FSA may waive such repayment if it is determined that:

- (1) The payment was made without fault on the part of the person; and
- (2) Requiring such repayment would be contrary to equity and good conscience.

(b) Unless an overpayment is otherwise recovered, or waived under paragraph (a), the Administrator, FSA shall recover the overpayment by deductions from any sums payable to such person.

(c) If the Administrator, FSA, or a court of competent jurisdiction, determines that a person:

- (1) Knowingly has made, or caused another to make, a false statement or representation of a material fact, or
- (2) Knowingly has failed, or caused another to fail, to disclose a material fact, and, as a result of such false statement or representation, or of such nondisclosure, such person has received any payment under this program to which the person was not entitled, such person shall, in addition to any other penalty provided by law, be ineligible for any further payment under this program.

(d) Except for overpayments determined by a court of competent jurisdiction, no repayment may be required, and no deduction may be made, under this section until a

determination and an opportunity for a fair hearing has been given to the person concerned, and the determination has become final.

(e) Whoever makes a false statement of a material fact knowing it to be false, or knowingly fails to disclose a material fact, for the purpose of obtaining or increasing for himself or for any other person any payments authorized to be furnished under this program shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned for not more than 1 year, or both.

§ 1580.505 Appeals.

Any person may obtain reconsideration and review of determinations made with respect to applications for program benefits under this part in accordance with appeal regulations of the 7 CFR part 780.

§ 1580.601 Implementation.

Trade adjustment assistance is available for the most recent marketing year for which prices were available on February 3, 2003.

§ 1580.602 Paperwork Reduction Act assigned number.

The information collection requirements contained in these regulations (7 CFR part 1580) have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under the provisions of 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35 and been assigned OMB control number xxxx-xxxx.

Dated: April 18, 2003.

A. Ellen Terpstra,

Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service.
[FR Doc. 03-10050 Filed 4-22-03; 8:45 am]

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