

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Parts 56 and 70

[Docket No. PY-03-001]

Increase in Fees and Charges for Egg, Poultry, and Rabbit Grading

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) proposes to increase the fees and charges for Federal voluntary egg, poultry, and rabbit grading. These fees and charges need to be increased to cover the increase in salaries of Federal employees, salary increases of State employees cooperatively utilized in administering the programs, and other increased Agency costs.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before July 28, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to David Bowden, Jr., Chief, Standardization Branch, Poultry Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 0259, room 3944-South, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW,

Washington, DC 20250. Comments may be faxed to (202) 690-0941.

State that your comments refer to Docket No. PY-03-001 and note the date and page number of this issue of the Federal Register.

Comments received may be inspected at the above location between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rex A. Barnes, Chief, Grading Branch, (202) 720-3271.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background and Proposed Changes

The Agricultural Marketing Act (AMA) of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621 *et seq.*) authorizes official voluntary grading and certification on a user-fee basis of eggs, poultry, and rabbits. The AMA provides that reasonable fees be collected from users of the program services to cover, as nearly as practicable, the costs of services rendered. The AMS regularly reviews these programs to determine if fees are adequate and if costs are reasonable.

A recent review determined that the existing fee schedule, effective January 1, 2003, will not generate sufficient revenues to cover program costs while maintaining an adequate reserve balance in FY 2004. Costs in FY 2004 are projected at \$29.8 million. Without a fee increase, FY 2004 revenues are projected at \$29.0 million and trust fund balances would be \$14.6 million. With a fee increase, FY 2004 revenues are projected at \$29.8 million and trust fund balances would remain at \$15.2 million.

Employee salaries and benefits account for approximately 82 percent of

the total operating budget. The last general and locality salary increase for Federal employees became effective on January 1, 2003 and it materially affected program costs. Projected cost estimates for that increase were based on a salary increase of 2.6 percent, however, the increase was actually 4.02 to 4.87 percent, depending on locality. Another general and locality salary increase estimated at 2 percent is expected in January 2004. Also, from October 2002 through September 2004, salaries and fringe benefits of federally-licensed State employees will have increased by about 3 percent.

The impact of these cost increases was determined for resident, nonresident, and fee services. To offset projected cost increases, the hourly resident and nonresident rate would be increased by approximately 3 percent and the fee rate would be increased by approximately 4 percent. The hourly rate for resident and nonresident service covers graders' salaries and benefits. The hourly rate for fee service covers graders' salaries and benefits, plus the cost of travel and supervision.

As shown in the table below, only the maximum monthly administrative charge that covers overhead costs for resident poultry and shell egg grading would be increased, while other administrative charges would not be changed.

The following table compares current fees and charges with proposed fees and charges for egg, poultry, and rabbit grading as found in 7 CFR parts 56 and 70:

Service	Current	Proposed
Resident Service (egg, poultry, and rabbit grading)		
Inauguration of service	310	310
Hourly charges: Regular hours	33.36	34.36
Administrative charges—Poultry grading:		
Per pound of poultry	.00037	.00037
Minimum per month	260	260
Maximum per month	2,675	2,755
Administrative charges—Shell egg grading:		
Per 30-dozen case of shell eggs	.048	.048
Minimum per month	260	260
Maximum per month	2,675	2,755
Administrative charges—Rabbit grading: Based on 25% of grader's salary, minimum per month	260	260

Service	Current	Proposed
Nonresident Service (egg and poultry grading)		
Hourly charges: Regular hours	33.36	34.36
Administrative charges: Based on 25% of grader's salary, minimum per month	260	260
Fee and Appeal Service (egg, poultry, and rabbit grading)		
Hourly charges:		
Regular hours	57.68	60.00
Weekend and holiday hours	66.64	69.32

Executive Order 12866

This action has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866 and has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Regulatory Flexibility

Pursuant to the requirements set forth in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA)(5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*), the AMS has considered the economic impact of this action on small entities. It is determined that its provisions would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

There are about 400 users of Poultry Programs' grading services. These official plants can pack eggs, poultry, and rabbits in packages bearing the USDA grade shield when AMS graders are present to certify that the products meet the grade requirements as labeled. Many of these users are small entities under the criteria established by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.201). These entities are under no obligation to use grading services as authorized under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

The AMS regularly reviews its user fee financed programs to determine if fees are adequate and if costs are reasonable. A recent review determined that the existing fee schedule, effective January 1, 2003, will not generate sufficient revenues to cover program costs while maintaining an adequate reserve balance in FY 2004. Costs in FY 2004 are projected at \$29.8 million. Without a fee increase, FY 2004 revenues are projected at \$29.0 million and trust fund balances would be \$14.6 million. With a fee increase, FY 2004 revenues are projected at \$29.8 million and trust fund balances would remain at \$15.2 million.

This action would raise the fees charged to users of grading services. The AMS estimates that overall, this rule would yield an additional \$800,000 during FY 2004. The hourly rate for resident and nonresident service would increase by approximately 3 percent and the fee rate would increase by

approximately 4 percent. The impact of these rate changes in a poultry plant would range from less than 0.0001 to 0.025 cents per pound of poultry handled. In a shell egg plant, the range would be less than 0.00002 to 0.11 cents per dozen eggs handled.

Civil Justice Reform

This action has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. This action is not intended to have retroactive effect. This rule will not preempt any State or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule. There are no administrative procedures which must be exhausted prior to any judicial challenge to the provisions of this rule.

Paperwork Reduction

The information collection requirements that appear in the sections to be amended by this action have been previously approved by OMB and assigned OMB Control Numbers under the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) as follows: § 56.52(a)(4)—No. 0581–0128; and § 70.77(a)(4)—No. 0581–0127.

A 30-day comment period is provided for interested persons to comment on this proposed rule. This period is appropriate in order to implement, as early as possible in FY 2004, any fee changes adopted as a result of this rulemaking action.

List of Subjects*7 CFR Part 56*

Eggs and egg products, Food grades and standards, Food labeling, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

7 CFR Part 70

Food grades and standards, Food labeling, Poultry and poultry products, Rabbits and rabbit products, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

For reasons set forth in the preamble, it is proposed that Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, parts 56 and 70 be amended as follows:

PART 56—GRADING OF SHELL EGGS

1. The authority citation for part 56 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621–1627.

2. Section 56.46 is revised to read as follows:

§ 56.46 On a fee basis.

(a) Unless otherwise provided in this part, the fees to be charged and collected for any service performed, in accordance with this part, on a fee basis shall be based on the applicable rates specified in this section.

(b) Fees for grading services will be based on the time required to perform the services. The hourly charge shall be \$60.00 and shall include the time actually required to perform the grading, waiting time, travel time, and any clerical costs involved in issuing a certificate.

(c) Grading services rendered on Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays shall be charged for at the rate of \$69.32 per hour. Information on legal holidays is available from the Supervisor.

3. In § 56.52, paragraph (a)(4) is revised to read as follows:

§ 56.52 Continuous grading performed on resident basis.

* * * * *

(a) * * *

(4) An administrative service charge based upon the aggregate number of 30-dozen cases of all shell eggs handled in the plant per billing period multiplied by \$0.048, except that the minimum charge per billing period shall be \$260 and the maximum charge shall be \$2,755. The minimum charge also applies where an approved application is in effect and no product is handled.

PART 70—VOLUNTARY GRADING OF POULTRY PRODUCTS AND RABBIT PRODUCTS

4. The authority citation for part 70 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621–1627.

5. Section 70.71 is revised to read as follows:

§ 70.71 On a fee basis.

(a) Unless otherwise provided in this part, the fees to be charged and collected for any service performed, in accordance with this part, on a fee basis shall be based on the applicable rates specified in this section.

(b) Fees for grading services will be based on the time required to perform such services for class, quality, quantity (weight test), or condition, whether ready-to-cook poultry, ready-to-cook rabbits, or specified poultry food products are involved. The hourly charge shall be \$60.00 and shall include the time actually required to perform the work, waiting time, travel time, and any clerical costs involved in issuing a certificate.

(c) Grading services rendered on Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays shall be charged for at the rate of \$69.32 per hour. Information on legal holidays is available from the Supervisor.

6. In § 70.77, paragraph (a)(4) is revised to read as follows:

§ 70.77 Charges for continuous poultry or rabbit grading performed on a resident basis.

* * * * *

(a) * * *

(4) For poultry grading: An administrative service charge based upon the aggregate weight of the total volume of all live and ready-to-cook poultry handled in the plant per billing period computed in accordance with the following: Total pounds per billing period multiplied by \$0.00037, except that the minimum charge per billing period shall be \$260 and the maximum charge shall be \$2,755. The minimum charge also applies where an approved application is in effect and no product is handled.

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Dated: June 23, 2003.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 03-16166 Filed 6-25-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**10 CFR Part 71****Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material; Public Meeting**

AGENCY: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the U.S.

Department of Transportation (DOT) are jointly seeking public views on the proposed changes to the requirements of the 1996 Edition for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material (TS-R-1). The changes will likely necessitate domestic compatibility rulemakings by both NRC and DOT. To aid in preparing comments, DOT is convening a public meeting as the U.S. competent authority for transportation matters before IAEA. Recognizing DOT's role, in lieu of separate meeting, NRC will participate at the meeting.

DATES: The public meeting will be held on July 22, 2003, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Written comments will be accepted at the meeting and until August 8, 2003. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the Commission is able to assure consideration only for comments received on or before this date.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be conducted at the Department of Transportation, Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Room 6244, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Details of the meeting can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/14mar20010800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2003/pdf/03-14585.pdf>.

Mail comments concerning the meeting to Michael Lesar, Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

Hand deliver comments to Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike (Mail Stop T6D59), Rockville, Maryland 20852, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Cook, Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, telephone: (301) 415-8521; e-mail: jrc1@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

On May 9, 2003, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) posted 63 proposed changes to the requirements of the 1996 Edition of the Agency's Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material (TS-R-1) on the world wide web (see http://hazmat.dot.gov/files/IAEA_TS-R-1_rev_prop.pdf). IAEA's revision process calls for Member States and International Organizations to have an opportunity for a period of 120 days to provide comments. The objective is publication of revised regulations in

2005, nominally to become effective worldwide in 2007.

The IAEA periodically revises its transportation regulations (referred to as TS-R-1) to reflect new information and accumulated experience. In 2000, IAEA requested proposals for change to ultimately result in a 2005 edition of TS-R-1. Over 200 proposals were submitted to IAEA to change the regulations, guidance material, or identify problems for further work. These were later narrowed down to 63 proposals that were accepted for comment.

Because some of the proposed changes being considered for the 2005 edition of TS-R-1 would, if approved, result in a need to consider a revision of U.S. transport regulations (49 CFR 100-185 and 10 CFR part 71), the DOT and the NRC are jointly seeking public views on the proposed changes. This information will assist DOT and NRC in having a full range of views as the proposals are developed. Note that future domestic rulemakings, if necessary, will continue to follow established rulemaking procedures, including the opportunity to formally comment on proposed rules.

NRC is currently reviewing the proposed changes and will provide comments to DOT. The DOT is the U.S. competent authority before IAEA for radioactive material transportation matters, and will be consolidating U.S. comments to IAEA. On June 10, 2003 (68 FR 34695), DOT published a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing that DOT will conduct a public meeting to accept comments and answer questions pertaining to the proposed changes on July 22, 2003, at DOT Headquarters. Rather than convene a separate public meeting, as co-regulators for U.S. radioactive material transportation matters, the NRC staff will participate at DOT's public meeting. NRC staff will be available to respond to any technical questions concerning the proposals' potential impacts to Type B or fissile materials regulated in 10 CFR part 71.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 20th day of June 2003.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

David W. Pstrak,

Transportation and Storage Project Manager, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

[FR Doc. 03-16175 Filed 6-25-03; 8:45 am]

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