

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 Part 927

[Docket No. FV00-927-3]

Winter Pears Grown in Oregon and Washington; Hearing on Proposed Amendment of Marketing Agreement and Order No. 927

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of hearing on proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of a public hearing to consider amending Marketing Agreement and Order No. 927, hereinafter referred to as the "order." The order regulates the handling of winter pears grown in Oregon and Washington. The purpose of the hearing is to receive evidence on amendments proposed by the Winter Pear Control Committee (Committee), which is responsible for local administration of the order. The proposals include amending the order to add the word "maturity" to the list of attributes that may be regulated; to provide for container regulations and marking requirements; and to allow alternates from the same district and group (growers or handlers) to serve when a member and that member's alternates are unable to attend a committee meeting.

DATES: The hearing date will begin at 9:00 a.m. in Portland, Oregon, on November 29, 2000.

ADDRESSES: The hearing will be held at the Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel, 8235 NE Airport Way, Portland, Oregon.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Melissa Schmaedick, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, room 2525-S, Washington, DC 20090-6456; telephone: (202) 205-2830, Fax: (202) 205-6632.

Small businesses may request information on this proceeding by

contacting Jay Guerber, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, room 2525-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456; telephone: (202) 720-2491, Fax: (202) 205-6632.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This administrative action is instituted pursuant to the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), hereinafter referred to as the "Act." This action is governed by the provisions of sections 556 and 557 of title 5 of the United States Code and, therefore, is excluded from the requirements of Executive Order 12866.

The Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) seeks to ensure that within the statutory authority of a program, the regulatory and informational requirements are tailored to the size and nature of small businesses. Interested persons are invited to present evidence at the hearing on the possible regulatory and informational impacts of the proposals on small businesses.

The amendments proposed herein have been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. They are not intended to have retroactive effect. If adopted, the proposed amendments would not preempt any State or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with the proposals.

The Act provides that administrative proceedings must be exhausted before parties may file suit in court. Under section 608c(15)(A) of the Act, any handler subject to an order may file with the Secretary a petition stating that the order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with law and request a modification of the order or to be exempted therefrom. A handler is afforded the opportunity for a hearing on the petition. The Act provides that the district court of the United States in any district in which the handler is an inhabitant, or has his or her principal place of business, has jurisdiction to review the Secretary's ruling on the petition, provided an action is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

The hearing is called pursuant to the provisions of the Act and the applicable rules of practice and procedure

governing the formulation of marketing agreements and orders (7 CFR part 900).

The Committee proposes three amendments as summarized below.

1. Amend the order to add the word "maturity" to the list of attributes that may be regulated in § 927.51.

2. Amend the order to authorize container and marking regulation. This would encompass capacity, weight, dimensions, and packing of the container, or containers, which may be used in packaging or handling of pears. To remain consistent with this amendment, § 927.5, the definition of size, will be revised to remove the specific reference to a western standard pear box with its dimensions.

3. Allow an alternate member from the same district and group (handler or grower) to serve in a member's place and stand in the event that both a member of the Committee and the Committee member's alternates are unable to attend a Committee meeting.

The Committee works with the Department in administering the order. These proposals have not received the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture.

The Committee believes that the proposed changes would improve the administration, operation, and functioning of the order.

Also, the Fruit and Vegetable Programs of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) proposes to allow such conforming changes to the order which may be necessary as a result of the hearing.

The public hearing is held for the purpose of: (i) Receiving evidence about the economic and marketing conditions which relate to the proposed amendments of the order; (ii) determining whether there is a need for the proposed amendments to the order; and (iii) determining whether the proposed amendments or appropriate modifications thereof will tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act.

Testimony is invited at the hearing on all the proposals and recommendations contained in this notice, as well as any appropriate modifications or alternatives.

All persons wishing to submit written material as evidence at the hearing should be prepared to submit four copies of such material at the hearing and should have prepared testimony available for presentation at the hearing.

From the time the notice of hearing is issued and until the issuance of a final

decision in this proceeding, Department employees involved in the decisional process are prohibited from discussing the merits of the hearing issues on an *ex parte* basis with any person having an interest in the proceeding. The prohibition applies to employees in the following organizational units: Office of the Secretary of Agriculture; Office of the Administrator, AMS; Office of the General Counsel; and the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS.

Procedural matters are not subject to the above prohibition and may be discussed at any time.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 927

Marketing agreements, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Winter pears.

PART 927—WINTER PEARS GROWN IN OREGON AND WASHINGTON

1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 927 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

2. Testimony is invited on the following proposals or appropriate alternatives or modifications to such proposals.

Proposals submitted by the Winter Pear Control Committee:

Proposal No. 1

Amend § 927.51 by adding a new paragraph (a)(3) to read as follows:

§ 927.51 Issuance of regulations; and modification suspension, or termination thereof.

(a) * * *

(3) Fix the size, capacity, weight, dimensions, markings, or pack of the container, or containers, which may be used in packaging or handling of pears.

* * * * *

Revise § 927.5 to read as follows:

§ 927.5 Size

Size means the number of pears which can be packed in a standard pear box when packed in accordance with the packing requirements of the U.S. Standards for Pears (part 51 of this title), or as such standards hereafter may be modified or as “size” may be more specifically defined in a regulation issued under this part.

Proposal No. 2

Revise § 927.28 to read as follows:

§ 927.28 Alternates for members of the Control Committee.

The first alternate for a member shall act in the place and stead of the member for whom he/she is an alternate during such member’s absence. In the event of the death, removal, resignation, or

disqualification of a member, his or her first alternate shall act as a member until a successor for the member is selected and has qualified. The second alternate for a member shall serve in the place and stead of the member for whom he/she is an alternate whenever both the member and his/her first alternate are unable to serve. In the event that both a member of the Control Committee and that member’s alternates are unable to attend a Control Committee meeting, the member or the Control Committee may designate any other alternate member from the same district and group (handler or grower) to serve in that member’s place and stead.

Proposal No. 3

Amend § 927.51 by revising paragraph (a)(1) to read as follows:

§ 927.51 Issuance of regulations; and modification suspension, or termination thereof.

(a) * * *

(1) May limit the total quantity of any grade, size, quality, maturity, or combination thereof, of any variety of pears grown in any district and may prescribe different requirements applicable to shipments to different export markets; or

* * * * *

The Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, submitted the following proposal:

Proposal No. 4

Make such changes as may be necessary to the order to conform with any amendment thereto that may result from the hearing.

Dated: November 2, 2000.

Kenneth C. Clayton,

Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 00–28659 Filed 11–7–00; 8:45 am]

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FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

11 CFR Parts 100, 102 and 104

[Notice 2000–19]

Rulemaking Petition: Reporting by Political Action Committees Notice of Disposition

AGENCY: Federal Election Commission.

ACTION: Notice of Disposition of Petition for Rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The Commission announces its disposition of a Petition for Rulemaking filed on September 20, 1999 by the Project on Government Oversight (“POGO”). The Petition urged the

Commission to revise various rules concerning reports filed by political action committees (“PACs”). The Commission has decided not to initiate a rulemaking in response to the Petition at this time. The Petition is available for inspection in the Commission’s Public Records Office, through its FAXLINE service, and on its website, www.FEC.gov.

DATES: November 2, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Rosemary C. Smith, Assistant General Counsel, or Ms. Mai T. Dinh, Attorney, 999 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20463, (202) 694–1650 or (800) 424–9530.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On September 20, 1999, the Commission received a Petition for Rulemaking from POGO. The Petition urged the Commission to take six actions with regard to reports filed by PACs by revising various sections in 11 CFR parts 100, 102, and 104.

The Commission published a Notice of Availability (“NOA”) on the Petition on October 13, 1999, 64 FR 55440. The NOA stated that several of the recommended actions address Commission internal procedures that are not properly the subject of rulemaking. Therefore, the Commission sought comments only on the four suggested actions that can be addressed through rulemaking.

The Commission received twenty-one timely comments and four late comments in response to the NOA from twenty-four commenters. Detailed comments were submitted by Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney; Democracy Advocate, U.S. Public Interest Research Group; Money and Politics Iowa; Institute for Social Justice; University of Maryland Department of Government and Politics; Michigan Citizen Action; Ohio Citizen Action; Common Cause; Center for Responsive Government; University of Akron’s Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics; and Project on Government Oversight. In addition to these comments, the Commission received comments expressing general support for the Petition from two individuals and substantially similar comments from eleven commenters including Colby College, Illinois Legislative Studies Center Sunshine Project, and Government Accountability Project. On November 2, 2000, the Commission voted to decline to open a new rulemaking in response to the Petition at this time for reasons stated below.