

STOP 0259, room 3944—South, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250—0259, (202) 720—3506.

The updated United States Grade Standards for Shell Eggs are available through the above address or by calling (202) 720—3506, faxing (202) 690—0941, e-mailing elizabeth.crosby@usda.gov, or by accessing the Internet at www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/standards.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (AMA), as amended (7 U.S.C. 1621 *et seq.*) authorizes the establishment of U.S. standards and grades for shell eggs. Section 203(c) of the AMA 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 Grade Standards for Shell Eggs do not appear in the Code of Federal Regulations but are maintained by USDA as AMS 56.

These standards and grades are maintained by AMS for use as a common language of trade among those buying and selling shell eggs. The standards are used by shell egg processors, wholesale traders, institutions, Federal and State governments, and retailers that sell eggs to the ultimate consumer. AMS is updating the United States Standards for Shell Eggs using the procedures that appear in Part 36 of Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR part 36).

AMS also administers a voluntary grading program for shell eggs under the AMA. Any interested person, commercial firm, or government agency can, for a fee, have AMS monitor processing operations and verify that the grade and size of eggs being packaged meet the requirements of the U.S. grade standards and weight classes. Eggs meeting the requirements can be packaged into cartons or other containers bearing the USDA grade shield. The grading program is implemented by the regulations in 7 CFR part 56.

Background and Comments

A notice of proposed changes to the United States Grade Standards for Shell Eggs was published in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 34764) on June 29, 1999. Comments on the proposal were solicited from interested parties until

August 30, 1999. Three comments were received during the 60-day comment period.

Comments from two State Departments of Agriculture supported the proposed changes, saying the changes would simplify and clarify the grade standards. The third commenter was a manufacturer of equipment that can print on egg cartons and directly onto an eggshell. The commenter objected to the proposed removal of provisions dealing with packaging materials, asking instead for stricter packaging requirements dealing with date coding, safe handling labels for consumers, and carton aeration. The provisions concerning packaging materials proposed for removal do not pertain to package labeling or date coding, but provide program users with suggested package specifications for strength and construction. Additionally, the action suggested by the commenter regarding mandatory requirements for package aeration could not be effectively implemented in the provisions proposed for removal. The majority of table eggs (those not packaged under USDA’s grading program) are not subject to these provisions. Therefore, after a review of the comments the Agency concludes that the standards should be revised as proposed, with one technical clarification described below.

Currently, the definition of “Loss” eggs includes inedible eggs. There is also a separate definition for “Inedible eggs” that includes examples of such eggs. When applying the grade tolerances of the standard, there is no need to separately identify inedible eggs from loss eggs. Therefore, AMS is deleting the general term “Inedible eggs” and is adding examples of inedible eggs to the definition of “Loss” eggs. This clarifies that eggs with rots, green whites, stuck yolks, blood rings, or free yolk in the white are to be classed as “Loss” eggs when applying grade tolerances.

AMS is making one technical clarification to the revisions as proposed. One example of an inedible egg currently listed in the “inedible eggs” definition was not included in the revised “Loss” definition. Therefore, to be clear that “sour eggs,” i.e., those eggs with an acid odor typically caused by microorganism growth within the egg, are to be classed as “Loss” eggs, this example has been added to the “Loss” definition.

Candling is the process of using light to help determine the quality of an egg. Automated mass scanning equipment is used by most egg packers to detect eggs with cracked shells and interior defects.

Hand-candling is done to spot-check and determine accuracy in grading. The breakout method of determining interior quality enables graders and students to calibrate their grading skills against an objective standard. In this method, a micrometer measures the height of the thick white of a broken-out egg and gives a direct reading in Haugh units. Currently, there is a Haugh unit range of “60 to 72” for A quality and “72 or higher” for AA quality. Because these values appear to overlap, AMS is revising the description for A quality to read “60 up to, but not including, 72.” This clarifies the wording and makes it consistent with the intent of the description.

Specifications for packaging materials are provided in the standards as examples of quality packaging. Since they would not have any recognized value to today’s industry, AMS is deleting this section entirely.

Authority: 7 USC 1621—1627.

Dated: June 14, 2000.

Kathleen A. Merrigan,
Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Commodity Credit Corporation’s (CCC) intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of the CCC Supplier Credit Guarantee Program (SCGP) based on re-estimates.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by August 21, 2000 to be assured of consideration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS: Contact Merle Brown, Director, Program Administration Division, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, AgStop 1031, Washington, DC 20250—1031, telephone (202) 720—3573.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: CCC Supplier Credit Guarantee Program (SCGP).

OMB Number: 0551—0037.

Expiration Date of Approval: December 31, 2000.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The primary objective of the SCGP is to expand U.S. agricultural exports by making available export credit guarantees to encourage U.S. private sector financing of foreign purchases of U.S. agricultural commodities on credit terms. Furthermore, the SCGP is designed to assist exporters of U.S. agricultural commodities who wish to provide relatively short term (up to 180 days) credits to their importers evidenced by promissory notes executed by such importers. The CCC currently offers the SCGP for exports to at least 11 countries and 10 country regions, with 1,008 exporters eligible to participate. Under 7 CFR Part 1493, Subpart D, exporters are required to submit the following: (1) Information about the exporter for program participation, (2) export sales information in connection with applying for a payment guarantee, (3) information regarding the actual export of the commodity, (evidence of export report), (4) notice of default and claims for loss, and (5) other documents, if applicable, including notice assignment of the right to receive proceeds under the export credit guarantee. In addition, each exporter and exporter's assignee (U.S. financial institution) must maintain records on all information submitted to CCC and in connection with sales made under the SCGP. The information collected is used by CCC to manage, plan, evaluate and account for government resources. The reports and records are required to ensure the proper and judicious use of public funds.

Estimate of Burden: The public reporting burden for these collections is estimated to average 0.4672 hours per response.

Respondents: Exporters of U.S. agricultural commodities, banks or other financial institutions, producer associations, export trade associations, and U.S. Government agencies.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 288 per annum.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 8.66 per annum.

Estimated Total Annual Burden of Respondents: 1,165.75 hours.

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

Requests for comments: Send comments regarding (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. Comments may be sent to Merle Brown, Director, Program Administration Division, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, AgStop 1031, Washington, DC 20250-1031, or to the Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503. Persons with disabilities who require an alternative means for communication of information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Mary T. Chambliss,

Acting, General Sales Manager, Foreign Agriculture Service.

[FR Doc. 00-15495 Filed 6-19-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-10-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Task Force on Agricultural Air Quality

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Task Force on Agricultural Air Quality will meet for the third time in FY 2000. Special emphasis will be placed on obtaining a greater about understanding the relationship between agricultural production and air quality. The meeting is open to the public.

DATES: The meeting will convene Tuesday, July 18, 2000 at 9 a.m. and continue until 4 p.m. The meeting will resume Wednesday, July 19, 2000 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Written material and requests to make oral presentations should reach the Natural Resources Conservation Service, at the address below, on or before July 12, 2000.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Hall of States, 444 Capitol Street NW, Rooms 333/335, Washington, DC 20001, telephone (202) 624-8670/fax (202) 624-8588. Written material and requests to make oral presentations should be sent to George Bluhm, University of California, Land, Air, and Water Resources, 151 Hoagland Hall, Davis, CA 95616-6827.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions or comments should be directed to George Bluhm, Designated Federal Official, telephone (530) 752-1018, fax (530) 752-1552, email bluhm@crocker.ucdavis.edu.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice of this meeting is given under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. 2. Additional information about the Task Force on Agricultural Air Quality, including any revised agendas for the July 18 and 19, 2000 meeting that occur after this **Federal Register** Notice is published, may be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/faca/aaqtf.html>.

Draft Agenda of the July 18 and 19, 2000 Meeting

- A. Welcome to Washington, DC
 - 1. USDA Official
 - 2. EPA Official
- B. Approve minutes of the February 15, 17, 2000, AAQTF meeting
- C. Subcommittee Reports
 - 1. Confined animals and emission factors
 - a. Air quality technology transfer white paper for concentrated animal feeding
 - b. EPA Interim guidance on the CERCLA Sec. 101 (10)h Federally Permitted Release Definition for Certain Air Emissions—(Impact on animal operations)
 - 2. Research priorities and oversight
 - a. ARS Agricultural Air Quality Research Program
 - b. ARS/EPA research strategy to improve accuracy of emission forecasting
 - c. CSREES Agricultural Air Quality Research Program
 - 3. Monitoring and health effects
 - 4. Agricultural burning
 - 5. Voluntary compliance
- D. Task Force charter
- E. Public input (Time will be reserved before lunch and at the close of each daily session to received public comment. Individual presentations will be limited to 5 minutes)

Procedural

This meeting is open to the public. At the discretion of the Chair, members of