

Market research studies¹ indicate that approximately 60 companies and 60 research institutes are involved in biopharming (both pharmaceutical and industrial) product research and development worldwide. A subset of this group involved only in industrial or industrial/pharmaceutical biopharming research and development could be affected by this interim rule. It is unclear at this time exactly how many of them will be affected, or how many of them will qualify for consideration as small entities. The Small Business Association (SBA) defines small entities engaged in research and development in the life sciences as those with no more than 500 employees.

As of May 2003, only five companies and two research institutes had filed notifications or applied for permits to introduce plants genetically engineered to produce industrial compounds. Of the seven entities, two met the SBA criteria for small entities. Two were presumed small, and the remaining three were large organizations.

Strengthening the conditions under which plants genetically engineered to produce industrial compounds are regulated is expected to provide some benefits to all affected biotechnology companies and organizations. While it is possible that a small entity would be affected by this interim rule, the number of such entities, if any, would be few. Regardless of the number of small entities affected, however, the rule is unlikely to have any significant economic impact on them. Costs of complying with the conditions set forth in this interim rule are expected to be negligible. All currently affected entities are already in voluntary compliance with the interim rule.

Under these circumstances, the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has determined that this action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

Executive Order 12372

This program/activity is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.025 and is subject to Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. (See 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V.)

¹ (1) *Biopharming: The Emerging World Market of Plant-Based Therapeutics*, Theta Reports, November 2002; (2) *The Transgenic Plant Market—Profits from New Products and Novel Drugs*, Drug and Market Development Corp., August 2002; (3) *World Agricultural Biotechnology: Transgenic Crops*, Freedonia Industry Study, March 2002.

Executive Order 12988

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. This rule: (1) Preempts all State and local laws and regulations that are inconsistent with this rule; (2) has no retroactive effect; and (3) does not require administrative proceedings before parties may file suit in court challenging this rule.

Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), the information collection or recordkeeping requirements included in this rule have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under OMB control number 0579–0216.

Government Paperwork Elimination Act Compliance

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service 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 the maximum extent possible. For information pertinent to GPEA compliance related to this interim rule, please contact Mrs. Celeste Sickles, APHIS' Information Collection Coordinator, at (301) 734–7477.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 340

Administrative practice and procedure, Biotechnology, Genetic engineering, Imports, Packaging and containers, Plant diseases and pests, Transportation.

■ Accordingly, we are amending 7 CFR part 340 as follows:

PART 340—INTRODUCTION OF ORGANISMS AND PRODUCTS ALTERED OR PRODUCED THROUGH GENETIC ENGINEERING WHICH ARE PLANT PESTS OR WHICH THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE ARE PLANT PESTS

■ 1. The authority citation for part 340 is revised to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1622n and 7701–7772; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

§ 340.3 [Amended]

■ 2. In § 340.3, paragraph (b)(4)(iii) is amended by adding the words “or industrial” immediately after the word “pharmaceutical”.

§ 340.4 [Amended]

■ 3. Section 340.4 is amended by adding an OMB control number citation at the

end of the section to read as follows: “(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0579–0216)”.

Done in Washington, DC, this 31st day of July 2003.

Bobby R. Acord,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 03–19877 Filed 8–5–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 993

[Docket No. FV03–993–4 IFR]

Dried Prunes Produced in California; Decreased Assessment Rate

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Interim final rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: This rule decreases the assessment rate established for the Prune Marketing Committee (Committee) under Marketing Order No. 993 for the 2003–04 and subsequent crop years from \$2.60 to \$2.00 per ton of salable dried prunes. The Committee locally administers the marketing order which regulates the handling of dried prunes grown in California. Authorization to assess dried prune handlers enables the Committee to incur expenses that are reasonable and necessary to administer the program. The crop year began August 1 and ends July 31. The assessment rate will remain in effect indefinitely unless modified, suspended, or terminated.

DATES: August 7, 2003. Comments received by October 6, 2003, will be considered prior to issuance of a final rule.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this rule. Comments must be sent to the Docket Clerk, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., STOP 0237, Washington, DC 20250–0237; Fax: (202) 720–8938; or E-mail: moab.docketclerk@usda.gov. Comments should reference the docket number and the date and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register** and will be available for public inspection in the Office of the Docket Clerk during regular business hours, or can be viewed at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/moab.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Toni Sasselli, Program Assistant, or Richard P. Van Diest, Marketing Specialist, California Marketing Field Office, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 2202 Monterey Street, suite 102B, Fresno, California 93721; telephone: (559) 487-5901; Fax (559) 487-5906; or George Kelhart, Technical Advisor, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., STOP 0237, Washington, DC 20250-0237; telephone: (202) 720-2491, Fax: (202) 720-8938.

Small businesses may request information on complying with this regulation by contacting Jay Guerber, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., STOP 0237, Washington, DC 20250-0237; telephone: (202) 720-2491, Fax: (202) 720-8938, or E-mail: Jay.Guerber@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule is issued under Marketing Agreement and Order No. 993, both as amended (7 CFR part 993), regulating the handling of dried prunes grown in California, hereinafter referred to as the "order." The marketing agreement and order are effective under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), hereinafter referred to as the "Act."

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) is issuing this rule in conformance with Executive Order 12866.

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. Under the marketing order now in effect, California dried prune handlers are subject to assessments. Funds to administer the order are derived from such assessments. It is intended that the assessment rate as issued herein will be applicable to all assessable dried prunes beginning on August 1, 2003, and continue until amended, suspended, or terminated. This rule will not preempt any State or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule.

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 USDA 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. Such handler is afforded the opportunity for

a hearing on the petition. After the hearing USDA would rule 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 USDA's ruling on the petition, provided an action is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

This rule decreases the assessment rate established for the Committee for the 2003-04 and subsequent crop years from \$2.60 per ton to \$2.00 per ton of salable dried prunes.

The California dried prune marketing order provides authority for the Committee, with the approval of USDA, to formulate an annual budget of expenses and collect assessments from handlers to administer the program. The members of the Committee are producers and handlers of California dried prunes. They are familiar with the Committee's needs and with the costs for goods and services in their local area and are thus in a position to formulate an appropriate budget and assessment rate. The assessment rate is formulated and discussed in a public meeting. Thus, all directly affected persons have an opportunity to participate and provide input.

For the 2002-03 and subsequent crop years, the Committee recommended, and USDA approved, an assessment rate that would continue in effect from crop year to crop year unless modified, suspended, or terminated by USDA upon recommendation and information submitted by the Committee or other information available to USDA.

The Committee met on June 26, 2003, and unanimously recommended 2003-04 expenditures of \$341,000 and an assessment rate of \$2.00 per ton of salable dried prunes. In comparison, last year's budgeted expenditures were \$384,370. The recommended assessment rate is \$0.60 lower than the rate currently in effect. The Committee was able to recommend a lower assessment rate this year because salable prune production this year is expected to be 170,500 tons, 15,500 tons higher than production last year. With a larger 2003-04 prune crop and lower budget, an assessment rate of \$2.00 per ton will provide sufficient funds for Committee operations this year.

The following table compares major budget expenditures recommended by the Committee on June 26, 2003, and major budget expenditures in the 2002-03 budget.

Budget expense categories	2002-03	2003-04
Total Personnel Salaries	\$232,575	\$220,540
Total Operating Expenses	136,850	103,750
Reserve for Contingencies	14,945	16,710

The assessment rate recommended by the Committee was derived by dividing anticipated expenses by the estimated salable tons of California dried prunes. Production of dried prunes for the year is estimated at 170,500 salable tons, which should provide \$341,000 in assessment income. Income derived from handler assessments would be adequate to cover budgeted expenses. Interest income also would be available if assessment income is reduced for some reason. The Committee is authorized to use excess assessment funds from the 2002-03 crop year (currently estimated at \$78,947) for up to 5 months beyond the end of the crop year to meet 2003-04 crop year expenses. At the end of the 5 months, the Committee refunds or credits excess funds to handlers (\$ 993.81(c)).

The assessment rate established in this rule will continue in effect indefinitely unless modified, suspended, or terminated by USDA upon recommendation and information submitted by the Committee or other available information.

Although this assessment rate is effective for an indefinite period, the Committee will continue to meet prior to or during each crop year to recommend a budget of expenses and consider recommendations for modification of the assessment rate. The dates and times of Committee meetings are available from the Committee or USDA. Committee meetings are open to the public and interested persons may express their views at these meetings. USDA will evaluate Committee recommendations and other available information to determine whether modification of the assessment rate is needed. Further rulemaking will be undertaken as necessary. The Committee's 2003-04 budget and those for subsequent crop years will be reviewed and, as appropriate, approved by USDA.

Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

Pursuant to requirements set forth in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has considered the economic impact of this rule on small entities. Accordingly, AMS has prepared this initial regulatory flexibility analysis.

The purpose of the RFA is to fit regulatory actions to the scale of business subject to such actions in order that small businesses will not be unduly or disproportionately burdened. Marketing orders issued pursuant to the Act, and the rules issued thereunder, are unique in that they are brought about through group action of essentially small entities acting on their own behalf. Thus, both statutes have small entity orientation and compatibility.

There are approximately 1,205 producers of dried prunes in the production area and approximately 21 handlers subject to regulation under the marketing order. Small agricultural producers are defined by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.201) as those having annual receipts less than \$750,000, and small agricultural service firms are defined as those whose annual receipts are less than \$5,000,000.

Eight of the 21 handlers (38%) shipped over \$5,000,000 of dried prunes and could be considered large handlers by the Small Business Administration. Thirteen of the 21 handlers (62%) shipped under \$5,000,000 of dried prunes and could be considered small handlers. An estimated 32 producers, or less than 3% of the 1,205 total producers, would be considered large growers with annual income over \$750,000. The majority of handlers and producers of California dried prunes may be classified as small entities.

This rule decreases the assessment rate established for the Committee and collected from handlers for the 2003–04 and subsequent crop years from \$2.60 per ton to \$2.00 per ton of salable dried prunes. The Committee unanimously recommended 2003–04 expenditures of \$341,000 and an assessment rate of \$2.00 per ton of salable dried prunes. The recommended assessment rate is \$0.60 lower than the current rate. The quantity of assessable dried prunes for the 2003–04 crop year is now estimated at 170,500 salable tons. Thus, the \$2.00 rate should provide \$341,000 in assessment income and be adequate to meet this year's expenses. Interest income also would be available to cover budgeted expenses if the 2003–04 expected assessment income falls short.

The following table compares major budget expenditures recommended by the Committee on June 26, 2003, and major budget expenditures in the 2002–03 budget.

Budget expense categories	2002–03	2003–04
Total Personnel Salaries	\$232,575	\$220,540

Budget expense categories	2002–03	2003–04
Total Operating Expenses	136,850	103,750
Reserve for Contingencies	14,945	16,710

Prior to arriving at its budget of \$341,000, the Committee considered information from various sources, such as the Committee's Executive Subcommittee. An alternative to this action would be to continue with the \$2.60 per ton assessment rate. However, an assessment rate of \$2.60 per ton in combination with the estimated crop of 170,500 salable tons would generate monies in excess of that needed to fund all the budget items for 2003–04. The assessment rate of \$2.00 per ton of salable dried prunes was determined by dividing the total recommended budget by the estimated salable dried prunes. The Committee is authorized to use excess assessment funds from the 2002–03 crop year (currently estimated at \$78,947) for up to 5 months beyond the end of the crop year to fund 2003–04 crop year expenses. At the end of the 5 months, the Committee refunds or credits excess funds to handlers (\$993.81(c)). Anticipated assessment income and interest income during 2003–04 would be adequate to cover authorized expenses.

The grower price for the 2003–04 season is expected to average about the same as the estimated 2002–03 average grower price of about \$800 per salable ton of dried prunes. Based on an estimated 170,500 salable tons of dried prunes, assessment revenue during the 2003–04 crop year is expected to be less than 1 percent of the total expected grower revenue.

This action decreases the assessment obligation imposed on handlers. Assessments are applied uniformly on all handlers, and some of the costs may be passed on to producers. However, decreasing the assessment rate reduces the burden on handlers, and may reduce the burden on producers. In addition, the Committee's meeting was widely publicized throughout the California dried prune industry and all interested persons were invited to attend the meeting and participate in Committee deliberations on all issues. Like all Committee meetings, the June 26, 2003, meeting was a public meeting and all entities, both large and small, were able to express views on this issue. Finally, interested persons are invited to submit information on the regulatory and informational impacts of this action on small businesses.

This action imposes no additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements on either small or large California dried prune handlers. As with all Federal marketing order programs, reports and forms are periodically reviewed to reduce information requirements and duplication by industry and public sector agencies.

USDA has not identified any relevant Federal rules that duplicate, overlap, or conflict with this rule.

A small business guide on complying with fruit, vegetable, and specialty crop marketing agreements and orders may be viewed at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/moab/html>. Any questions about the compliance guide should be sent to Jay Guerber at the previously mentioned address in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section.

After consideration of all relevant material presented, including the information and recommendation submitted by the Committee and other available information, it is hereby found that this rule, as hereinafter set forth, will tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553, it is also found and determined upon good cause that it is impracticable, unnecessary, and contrary to the public interest to give preliminary notice prior to putting this rule into effect, and that good cause exists for not postponing the effective date of this rule until 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register** because: (1) The 2003–04 crop year began on August 1, 2003, and the marketing order requires that the rate of assessment for each crop year apply to all assessable dried prunes handled during such crop year; (2) this rule decreases the assessment rate for assessable prunes beginning with the 2003–04 crop year; (3) handlers are aware of this action which was unanimously recommended by the Committee at a public meeting and is similar to other assessment rate actions issued in past years; and (4) this interim final rule provides a 60-day comment period, and all comments timely received will be considered prior to finalization of this rule.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 993

Marketing agreements, Plums, Prunes, Reporting and Recordkeeping requirements.

■ For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR part 993 is amended as follows:

PART 993—DRIED PRUNES PRODUCED IN CALIFORNIA

■ 1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 993 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

■ 2. Section 993.347 is revised to read as follows:

§ 993.347 Assessment rate.

On and after August 1, 2003, an assessment rate of \$2.00 per ton is established for California dried prunes.

Dated: July 31, 2003.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 03–19969 Filed 8–5–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

10 CFR Parts 170 and 171

RIN 3150–AH14

Revision of Fee Schedules; Fee Recovery for FY 2003; Correction

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Final rule; correction.

SUMMARY: This document corrects a final rule appearing in the **Federal Register** on June 18, 2003 (68 FR 36714) amending the licensing, inspection, and annual fees charged by the NRC to its applicants and licensees. This action is necessary to correct typographical errors and mislabeled fee types in the Schedule of Materials Fees.

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 18, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ann Norris, telephone 301–415–7807, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

■ In rule FR Doc. 03–14960 published June 18, 2003 (68 FR 36714) make the following corrections:

■ 1. On page 36716, third column, C. Specific Part 171 Issues, the last sentence of the first paragraph reads “* * * is recovered through annuals fees” and is corrected to read “is recovered through annual fees.”

§170.31 [Corrected]

■ 2. On page 36731, § 170.31, Category 3, Byproduct material, paragraph P is corrected to read “P. All other specific byproduct material licenses, except those in Categories 4A through 9D: Application * * * \$1,200.”

■ 3. On page 36731, § 170.31, Category 3, Byproduct material, paragraph Q is corrected to read “Q. Registration of a device(s) generally licensed under part 31 of this chapter: Registration * * * \$620.”

§171.16 [Corrected]

■ 4. On pages 36734 and 36735, § 171.16 (c), the header for the second column of the small entity fee table is corrected to read “Maximum annual fee per licensed category.”

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 30th day of July, 2003.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Alzonía W. Shepard,

Federal Register Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 03–19888 Filed 8–5–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NATIONAL CREDIT UNION ADMINISTRATION

12 CFR Part 701

Loan Interest Rates

AGENCY: National Credit Union Administration.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The current 18 percent per year federal credit union maximum loan rate is scheduled to revert to 15 percent on September 9, 2003, unless otherwise provided by the NCUA Board (Board). A 15 percent ceiling would restrict certain categories of credit and adversely affect the financial condition of a number of federal credit unions. At the same time, prevailing market rates and economic conditions do not justify a rate higher than the current 18 percent ceiling. Accordingly, the Board hereby continues an 18 percent federal credit union loan rate ceiling for the period September 9, 2003 through March 8, 2005. The Board is prepared to reconsider the 18 percent ceiling at any time should changes in economic conditions warrant.

DATES: Effective September 5, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel Gordon, Senior Investment Officer, Office of Strategic Program Support and Planning, at the National Credit Union Administration, 1775 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314–3428, or telephone 703–518–6620.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Public Law 96–221, enacted in 1980, raised the loan interest rate ceiling for federal credit unions from one percent

per month (12 percent per year) to 15 percent per year. 12 U.S.C. 1757(5)(A)(vi). The law also authorized the Board to set a higher limit, after consulting with Congress, the Department of Treasury and other federal financial agencies, for a period not to exceed 18 months, if the Board determined that: (1) money market interest rates have risen over the preceding six months; and (2) prevailing interest rate levels threaten the safety and soundness of individual credit unions as evidenced by adverse trends in growth, liquidity, capital, and earnings.

On December 3, 1980, the Board determined that the foregoing conditions had been met. Accordingly, the Board raised the loan ceiling to 21 percent. In the unstable environment of the first half of the 1980s, the Board lowered the loan rate ceiling from 21 percent to 18 percent, effective May 18, 1987. This action was taken in an environment of falling market interest rates from 1980 to early 1987. The ceiling has remained at 18 percent to the present. The Board believes retaining the 18 percent ceiling will permit credit unions to continue to meet their current lending programs and permit the necessary flexibility for credit unions to react to any adverse economic developments.

The Board would prefer not to set loan interest rate ceilings for federal credit unions. Credit unions are cooperatives and establish loan and share rates consistent with the needs of their members and prevailing market interest rates. The Board supports free lending markets and the ability of federal credit union boards of directors to establish loan rates that reflect current market conditions and the interests of their members.

Congress, however, has imposed loan rate ceilings since 1934, and, as stated previously, in 1980, Congress set the ceiling at 15 percent but authorized the Board to set a ceiling in excess of 15 percent, if conditions warrant. The following analysis justifies a ceiling above 15 percent, but at the same time does not support a ceiling above the current 18 percent. The Board is prepared to reconsider this action at any time should changes in economic conditions warrant.

Money Market Interest Rates

Although money market interest rates have generally declined, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System's (the FRB's) aggressive monetary policy and larger anticipated federal budget deficits suggest money market rates will rise in the months