

*Total Burden Hours: 11,778.*

### **Agricultural Marketing Service**

*Title:* The National Organic Program.

*OMB Control Number:* 0581-New.

*Summary of Collection:* Information is required to accredit agents who will serve as inspectors of organically produced agricultural products and will document adherence to the established standards.

*Need and Use of The Information:*

Information will be used by the Agricultural Marketing Service to certify inspection agents on an annual basis.

*Description of Respondents:* Farms; Individuals or households; Business or other for-profit; State, Local or Tribal Government.

*Number of Respondents:* 187,651.

*Frequency of Responses:*

Recordkeeping; Reporting: Annually.

*Total Burden Hours:* 377,171.

**Donald Hulcher,**

*Departmental Clearance Officer.*

[FR Doc. 97-33589 Filed 12-23-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-01-M

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **Agricultural Marketing Service**

[FV-96-327]

#### **United States Standards for Grades of Canned Apples**

**AGENCY:** Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is soliciting comments on its proposal to change the United States Standard for Grades of Canned Apples. Specifically, AMS is proposing to lower the recommended drained weight for canned apples packed in No. 10 cans. This change would allow more equitable utilization of processed apples across domestic growing regions and will help the apple industry to meet its market needs.

**DATES:** Comments must be submitted on or before February 23, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments may be submitted to Randle A. Macon, Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 0709, South Building; STOP 0247, P.O. Box 96456; Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; faxed to (202) 690-1087; or e-mailed to Randle\_A\_Macon@usda.gov.

Comments should reference the date and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**. All comments

received will be made available for public inspection at the address listed above during regular business hours.

The current United States Standards for Grades of Canned Apples, along with the proposed changes, are available either through the afore-mentioned address or by accessing AMS's Home Page on the Internet at the following address: [www.ams.usda.gov/standards/frutcan.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/standards/frutcan.htm).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Contact Randle A. Macon at (202) 720-4693.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 203(c) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended, (7 U.S.C. 1622 (c)) 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 make copies of official standards available upon request. The United States Standards for Grades of Canned Apples no longer appear in the Code of Federal Regulations but are maintained by the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

AMS is proposing to change the United States Standards for Grades of Canned Apples using the procedures it published in the August 13, 1997, **Federal Register** and that appear in Part 36 of Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR Part 36).

AMS received petitions from Independent Food Processors Company of Sunnyside, Washington; and Snokist Growers of Yakima, Washington, requesting the revision of the United States Standards for Grades of Canned Apples. The two petitioners represent a significant part of the Pacific Northwest apple industry. The Pacific Northwest apple industry provides almost half of the apples produced domestically.<sup>1</sup>

The petitions request that the recommend drained weight of 96 ounces for apples packed in No. 10 size cans, in the U.S. Standards for Grades of Canned Apples, is difficult to obtain and puts Pacific Northwest processors at an economic disadvantage in bidding for government and non-government contracts. The reasons given for this disparity are that the varietal types of apples and the growing conditions in the Northwest region are different from other apple producing regions around

the country. The petitioners state that to meet the standard when packing certain varieties of apples, the cans are over-filled.

This condition may cause damage to the sliced apples which may cause the slices to be graded as less than "Grade A." To meet USDA requirements for drained weight, some processors may be required to put more product into the can, causing economic hardship, damage to the product, and sometimes loss of the integrity of the can seal. If the seal's integrity is lost during processing, the product's wholesomeness is jeopardized.

The remedies recommended by the petitioners, though similar in purpose, are different. Snokist Growers of Yakima, Washington, recommends a reduction in the recommended drained weight for apples packed in No. 10 size cans, from 96 ounces to 92 ounces. Independent Food Processors Company of Sunnyside, Washington, recommends the elimination of the recommended drained weight for apples packed in No. 10 size cans, from the U.S. Standards for Grades of Canned Apples. If that is not possible the petitioner recommends the incorporation of a "fill weight program" in the U.S. Standards for Grades of Canned Apples to ensure that the "recommended fill of container" requirement is met with a reduction in the recommended drained weight for apples packed in No. 10 size cans, from 96 ounces to 85 ounces.

USDA has reviewed the petitions and data submitted, and has gathered additional information from relevant government agencies and industry sources including growers, processors, and buyers. Based on this information, USDA has found that there may be a disparity between the drained weights for canned apples from Pacific Northwest processors and those from other sections of the country. Though a variation in drained weights may exist, our review has shown that the difference is not great enough to warrant the changes to the Standards recommended by Independent Food Processors Company of Sunnyside, Washington.

Based on these findings, the USDA has agreed with the recommendation from Snokist Growers of Yakima, Washington, and is proposing to lower the recommended drained weight for apples packed No. 10 size cans, from 96 ounces to 92 ounces in the U.S. Standards for Grades of Canned Apples. This change would allow a more equitable marketing environment for the domestic canned apple industry.

<sup>1</sup>Source—USDA, NASS, ASB.

A 60-day comment period is provided for interested persons to comment on this change to the Standards.

**Authority:** 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.

Dated: December 18, 1997.

**Robert C. Keeney,**

*Deputy Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs.*

[FR Doc. 97-33590 Filed 12-23-97; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Agricultural Marketing Service

[TM-97-00-200]

#### Notice of Program Continuation

**AGENCY:** Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice inviting applications for Fiscal Year 1998 Grant Funds under the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) was allocated \$1,200,000 in the Federal budget for fiscal year 1998. Funds remain available for this program. States interested in obtaining funds under the program are invited to submit proposals. While only State Departments of Agriculture or other appropriate State Agencies are eligible to apply for funds, State Agencies are encouraged to involve industry organizations in the development of proposals and the conduct of projects.

**DATES:** Applications will be accepted through June 19, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Proposals may be sent to Dr. Larry V. Summers, FSMIP, Staff Officer, Transportation and Marketing, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4006 South Building, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Larry V. Summers, 202) 720-2704.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** FSMIP is authorized under Section 204(b) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621 *et seq.*). The program is a matching fund program designed to assist State Departments of Agriculture or other appropriate State Agencies in conducting studies or developing innovative approaches related to the marketing of agricultural products. Other organizations interested in participating in this program should contact their State Department of Agriculture's Marketing Division to discuss their proposal.

Mutually acceptable proposals are submitted by the State Agency and must be accompanied by a completed Standard Form (SF)-424 with SF-424A and SF-424B attached. FSMIP funds may not be used for advertising or, with limited exceptions, for the purchase of equipment or facilities. Guidelines may be obtained from your State Department of Agriculture or the above AMS contact.

States are encouraged to submit proposals for projects which will:

(1) Assist in identifying and expanding market opportunities for U.S. agricultural products, both domestically and internationally, through the development and market testing of new or improved products and value-adding services;

(2) Address agricultural marketing issues and concerns of particular importance to relatively small, limited-resource farms and rural enterprises; and,

(3) Encourage the development of marketing practices and technologies aimed at improving the quality of agricultural products or the sustainability of natural resources and the environment.

Proposals addressing other marketing objectives or issues also will receive consideration.

FSMIP is listed in the "Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance" under number 10.156 and subject Agencies must adhere to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bars discrimination in all Federally assisted programs.

**Authority:** 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.

Dated: December 18, 1997.

**Eileen S. Stommes,**

*Deputy Administrator, Transportation and Marketing.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Newspapers Used for Publication of Legal Notice of Appealable Decisions for Intermountain Region, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, and Wyoming

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This notice lists the newspapers that will be used by all ranger districts, forests, and the Regional Office of the Intermountain Region to publish legal notice of all decisions subject to appeal under 36 CFR parts 215 and 217. The intended

effect of this action is to inform interested members of the public which newspapers will be used to publish legal notices of decisions, thereby allowing them to receive constructive notice of a decision, to provide clear evidence of timely notice, and to achieve consistency in administering the appeals process.

**DATES:** Publication of legal notices in the listed newspapers will begin with decisions subject to appeal that are made on or after March 1, 1996. The list of newspapers will remain in effect until October 1996 when another notice will be published in the **Federal Register**.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Donald W. Murphy, Regional Appeals Manager, Intermountain Region, 324 25th Street, Ogden, UT 84401, phone (801) 625-5274.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The administrative appeal procedures 36 CFR parts 215 and 217, of the Forest Service require publication of legal notice in a newspaper of general circulation of all decisions subject to appeal. This newspaper publication of notices of decisions is in addition to direct notice to those who have requested notice in writing and to those known to be interested and affected by a specific decision.

The legal notice is to identify: The decision by title and subject matter; the date of the decision; the name and title of the official making the decision; and how to obtain copies of the decision. In addition, the notice is to state the date the appeal period begins which is the day following publication of the notice.

The timeframe for appeal shall be based on the date of publication of the notice in the first (principal) newspaper listed for each unit.

The newspapers to be used are as follows:

#### Regional Forester, Intermountain Region

For decisions made by the Regional Forester affecting National Forests in Idaho:

*The Idaho Statesman*, Boise, Idaho

For decisions made by the Regional Forester affecting National Forests in Nevada:

*The Reno Gazette-Journal*, Reno, Nevada

For decisions made by the Regional Forester affecting National Forests in Wyoming:

*Casper Star-Tribune*, Casper, Wyoming

For decisions made by the Regional Forester affecting National Forests in Utah: