

after careful consideration of all available information, including: (1) The estimated quantity of salable oil of each class held by producers and handlers; (2) the estimated demand for each class of oil; (3) the prospective production of each class of oil; (4) the total of allotment bases of each class of oil for the current marketing year and the estimated total of allotment bases of each class for the ensuing marketing year; (5) the quantity of reserve oil, by class, in storage; (6) producer prices of oil, including prices for each class of oil; and (7) general market conditions for each class of oil, including whether the estimated season average price to producers is likely to exceed parity. Based on its review, the Committee believes that the salable quantity and allotment percentage levels recommended would achieve the objectives sought.

Without any regulations in effect, the Committee believes the industry would return to the pronounced cyclical price patterns that occurred prior to the order, and that prices in 2003–2004 would decline substantially below current levels.

As stated earlier, the Committee believes that the order has contributed extensively to the stabilization of producer prices, which prior to 1980 experienced wide fluctuations from year-to-year. National Agricultural Statistics Service records show that the average price paid for both classes of spearmint oil ranged from about \$4.00 per pound to about \$12.50 per pound during the period between 1968 and 1980. Prices have been consistently more stable since the marketing order's inception in 1980. For much of the 1990's, prices had stabilized at about \$13.00 per pound for Scotch spearmint oil and about \$11.00 per pound for Native spearmint oil.

Over the last four years, however, large production and carry-in inventories have contributed to declining prices, despite the Committee's efforts to balance available supplies with demand. Further, over the same period, prices have ranged from \$8.00 to \$11.00 per pound for Scotch spearmint oil and between \$9.00 to \$10.00 per pound for Native spearmint oil.

According to the Committee, the recommended salable quantities and allotment percentages are expected to achieve the goals of market and price stability.

As previously stated, annual salable quantities and allotment percentages have been issued for both classes of spearmint oil since the order's inception. Reporting and recordkeeping

requirements have remained the same for each year of regulation. These requirements have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under OMB Control No. 0581–0065. Accordingly, this action would not impose any additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements on either small or large spearmint oil producers and handlers. All reports and forms associated with this program are reviewed periodically in order to avoid unnecessary and duplicative information collection by industry and public sector agencies. The USDA has not identified any relevant Federal rules that duplicate, overlap, or conflict with this proposed rule.

The Committee's meeting was widely publicized throughout the spearmint oil industry and all interested persons were invited to attend and participate on all issues. In addition, interested persons are invited to submit information on the regulatory and informational impacts of this action on small businesses.

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.

A 20-day comment period is provided to allow interested persons the opportunity to respond to the proposal, including any regulatory and informational impacts of this action on small businesses. This comment period is deemed appropriate so that a final determination can be made prior to June 1, 2003, the beginning of the 2003–2004 marketing year. All written comments received within the comment period will be considered before a final determination is made on this matter.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 985

Marketing agreements, Oils and fats, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Spearmint oil.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR Part 985 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 985—MARKETING ORDER REGULATING THE HANDLING OF SPEARMINT OIL PRODUCED IN THE FAR WEST

1. The authority citation for 7 CFR Part 985 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

2. A new § 985.222 is added to read as follows:

[**Note:** This section will not appear in the Code of Federal Regulations.]

§ 985.222 Salable quantities and allotment percentages—2003–2004 marketing year.

The salable quantity and allotment percentage for each class of spearmint oil during the marketing year beginning on June 1, 2003, shall be as follows:

(a) Class 1 (Scotch) oil—a salable quantity of 857,444 pounds and an allotment percentage of 45 percent.

(b) Class 3 (Native) oil—a salable quantity of 808,528 pounds and an allotment percentage of 38 percent.

Dated: March 6, 2003.

Kenneth C. Clayton,

Acting Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 1218

[Doc. No. FV–03–701–PR]

Blueberry Promotion, Research, and Information Order; Amendment No. 2 To Change the Name of the U.S.A. Cultivated Blueberry Council and Increase Membership

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this rule is to seek comments on changing the title of the U.S.A. Cultivated Blueberry Council to the “U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council” (Council) to help avoid any further confusion in the industry regarding the specific type of blueberry and industry segment represented by the Council, and to make the name of the Council consistent with industry nomenclature and to add one member and alternate to the Council to represent the state of Washington—the sixth largest highbush blueberry producing state.

DATES: Comments must be received by May 12, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this proposed rule to: Docket Clerk, Research and Promotion Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs (FV), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), USDA, Stop 0244, Room 2535–S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250–0244.

Comments should be submitted in triplicate and will be made available for public inspection at the above address during regular business hours. Comments may also be submitted