

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 relevant provisions of this part require that the percentages designated herein for the 2002–03 crop year apply to all NS and ZC raisins acquired from the beginning of that crop year; (2) handlers are currently marketing their 2002–03 crop NS and ZC raisins and this action should be taken promptly to achieve the intended purpose of making the full trade demands available to handlers; (3) handlers are aware of this action, which was recommended at public meetings, and need no additional time to comply with these percentages; 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 989

Grapes, Marketing agreements, Raisins, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

■ For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR part 989 is amended to read as followed:

PART 989—RAISINS PRODUCED FROM GRAPES GROWN IN CALIFORNIA

■ 1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 989 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

■ 2. Section 989.256 is added to Subpart—Supplementary Regulations to read as follows:

Note: This section will not appear in the annual Code of Federal Regulations.

§ 989.256 Final free and reserve percentages for the 2002–03 crop year.

The final percentages for standard Natural (sun-dried) Seedless and Zante Currant raisins acquired by handlers during the crop year beginning on August 1, 2002, which shall be free tonnage and reserve tonnage, respectively, are designated as follows:

Varietal type	Free percentage	Reserve percentage
Natural (sun-dried) Seedless	53	47
Zante Currant ...	80	20

Dated: March 27, 2003.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

9 CFR Part 94

[Docket No. 99–032–2]

Importation of Cooked Meat and Meat Products

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are amending the regulations governing the importation of certain animals, meat, and other animal products to allow meat cooked in plastic in processing establishments located in regions where rinderpest or foot-and-mouth disease exists to be further processed after cooking and before importation. Additionally, we are allowing the pink juice test to be used in determining whether ground meat cooked in such establishments has been adequately cooked. These amendments will provide foreign meat processing establishments with additional processing options while continuing to protect against the introduction of rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease into the United States.

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 2, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Masoud Malik, Senior Staff Veterinarian, Products Program, National Center for Import and Export, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 40, Riverdale, MD 20737–1231; (301) 734–3277.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The regulations in 9 CFR part 94 (referred to below as the regulations) govern the importation of specified animals and animal products to prevent the introduction into the United States of various animal diseases, including rinderpest, foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), bovine spongiform encephalopathy, swine vesicular disease, hog cholera, and African swine fever. These are dangerous and destructive communicable diseases of ruminants and swine.

Under § 94.4 of the regulations, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection

Service (APHIS) prohibits the importation of cured and cooked meat from regions where rinderpest or FMD exists unless the cured or cooked meat fulfills the conditions prescribed in that section.

Meat Cut Into Cubes

Section 94.4(b)(8) requires that cooked ruminant or swine meat imported into the United States from regions where rinderpest or FMD exists be inspected at the port of arrival by an inspector of the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Department) and be found to be thoroughly cooked. For meat that is cooked in plastic, thoroughness of cooking must be determined either by a temperature indicator device (TID) or by the pink juice test performed on a piece of meat known as an indicator piece. It is important for the FSIS inspector to be able to associate a TID or indicator piece with the plastic tube of cooked meat that it came from. Until now, that has meant that meat from various cooking tubes could not be combined after cooking for further processing at a foreign meat processing establishment before being exported to the United States.

On May 22, 2002, we published a proposed rule in the **Federal Register** (67 FR 35936–35939, Docket No. 99–032–1) in which we proposed to allow meat cooked in different plastic tubes in a single cycle of cooking to be combined after that cooking for further processing. Additionally, we proposed to allow the pink juice test to be used in determining whether ground meat cooked in foreign meat processing establishments has been adequately cooked.

We solicited comments concerning our proposal for 60 days ending July 22, 2002. We received 16 comments by that date. They were from livestock associations, food processing associations, a State department of agriculture, foreign and domestic meat processors, importers, manufacturers of packaged food products, and a meat science association. Three of the commenters opposed the proposed provisions, two supported the proposal as written, and the rest of the commenters recommended changes to the proposed rule. We discuss the issues raised by the commenters below.

Comments Received

In our proposed rule, we referred to meat that is cooked in the same cooking cycle as being part of the same “shift.” A number of commenters stated that the word “shift” connotes the time worked by personnel, rather than a cooking