

limited to once per year. Rather, TASC program funding should be made available as the need arises, perhaps by utilizing a quick-response mechanism.

Response: The agency agrees with this comment and has included language in § 1487.5 to provide for the establishment of a formal quick-response process. The periodic announcements indicating that the CCC will be accepting applications also will provide the details of the various application options that are available.

In addition to the language that was incorporated in § 1487.5 in response to the public comment, this final rule adds a new provision in § 1487.6(a)(8) to complement § 1487.2 and clearly indicate that the TASC program is intended to benefit the represented industry rather than a specific company or brand. This final rule also includes other minor organizational, administrative and editorial changes so as to improve the clarity and consistency of the regulations.

Effective Date

This rule is effective August 18, 2003 but does not apply to projects approved prior to the effective date.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 1487

Agricultural commodities, Exports, Specialty crops.

■ In consideration of the foregoing, the interim rule published at 67 FR 57326–57329, September 10, 2002, adding 7 CFR part 1487 is adopted as final with the following changes:

PART 1487—TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIALTY CROPS

■ 1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 1487 continues to read as follows:

Authority: Sec. 3205 of Pub. L. 107–171.

■ 2. Section 1487.1 is amended by adding the following new definitions in alphabetical order:

§ 1487.1 What special definitions apply to the TASC program?

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Eligible Organization—Any U.S. organization, including, but not limited to, U.S. government agencies, State government agencies, non-profit trade associations, universities, agricultural cooperatives, and private companies.

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Participant—An entity which has entered into a TASC agreement with the CCC.

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■ 3. Section 1487.5 is amended as follows:

a. By revising paragraphs (a) and (b)(2)(ii);

b. By redesignating paragraphs (b)(2)(iii) through (b)(2)(vii) as paragraphs (b)(2)(iv) through (b)(2)(viii); and

c. By adding a new paragraph (b)(2)(iii).

The revision and addition read as follows:

§ 1487.5 What is the process for submitting proposals?

(a) *General.* Periodically the CCC will inform the public of the process by which interested eligible organizations may submit proposals for TASC program funding. This announcement will, among other things, include information on any deadlines for submitting proposals and the address of the office to which the proposals should be sent. The CCC also may announce the availability of a Quick Response Fund within the TASC program. Proposals submitted under any form of quick response process may be submitted at any time during the year but must meet the basic requirements of the program and any specific requirements of that particular process. Organizations interested in participating in the TASC program may submit their proposals electronically or in paper copy. Although no specific format is required, a sample format for proposals is available from the address provided in this rule.

(b) * * *

(2) * * *

(ii) The amount of funding requested and a justification for why federal funding is needed;

(iii) Beginning and ending dates for the proposed project;

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■ 4. Section 1487.6 is amended as follows:

a. By removing paragraph (a)(7);

b. By redesignating paragraph (a)(1) as paragraph (a)(7);

c. By redesignating paragraphs (a)(2) through (a)(6) as paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(5);

d. By redesignating paragraph (a)(8) as paragraph (a)(6);

e. By revising newly redesignated paragraph (a)(2); and

f. By adding a new paragraph (a)(8).

The revision and addition read as follows:

§ 1487.6 How are proposals evaluated?

(a) * * *

(2) The potential trade impact of the proposed project on market retention, market access, and market expansion, including the potential for expanding commercial sales in the targeted market;

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(8) In cases where the CCC receives multiple proposals from different

applicants which address essentially the same barrier, the nature of the applicant organization will be taken into consideration, with a greater weight given to those organizations with the broadest base of producer representation.

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■ 5. Section 1487.7 is revised to read as follows:

§ 1487.7 How are agreements formalized?

Following the approval of a proposal, the CCC will enter into a written agreement with the organization that submitted the proposal. This program agreement will incorporate the proposal as approved by the FAS, include a maximum dollar amount that may be reimbursed (the funding level), and identify terms and conditions under which the CCC will reimburse certain costs of the project. Program agreements also will outline any specific responsibilities of the participant, including, but not limited to, the timely and effective implementation of program activities and the submission of a written report(s), on no less than an annual basis, which evaluates the TASC project using the performance measures presented in the approved proposal.

■ 6. Section 1487.8 is removed.

■ 7. Section 1487.9 is redesignated as 1487.8 and revised to read as follows:

§ 1487.8 How are payments made?

(a) *Reimbursement.* (1) Following the implementation of a project for which the CCC has agreed to provide funding, a participant may submit claims for reimbursement of eligible expenses to the extent that the CCC has agreed to pay such expenses. Any changes to approved activities must be approved in writing by the FAS before any reimbursable expenses associated with the change can be incurred. A participant will be reimbursed after the CCC reviews the claim and determines that it is complete.

(2) All claims for reimbursement must be received no later than 90 calendar days following the expiration or termination date of the program agreement. For program agreements which extend beyond twelve months, all claims for reimbursement must be received no later than 90 calendar days following the next anniversary of the effective date of the agreement.

(3) Participants shall maintain complete records of all program expenditures, identified by TASC agreement number, program year, country or region, activity number and cost category. Such records shall be accompanied by original documentation