

and uniform on all handlers. Some of the additional costs may be passed on to producers. However, these costs are offset by the benefits derived by the operation of the marketing order. In addition, the Committee's meetings were widely publicized throughout the Idaho-Eastern Oregon onion industry and all interested persons were invited to attend the meetings and participate in Committee deliberations on all issues. Like all Committee meetings, the April 3, and the June 12, 2003, meetings were open to the public and all entities, both large and small, were able to express views on this issue.

This rule imposes no additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements on either small or large Idaho-Eastern Oregon onion 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 proposed rule concerning this action was published in the **Federal Register** on July 9, 2003 (68 FR 40815). A copy of the rule was provided to Committee staff, who in turn made it available to onion producers, handlers, and other interested persons. Finally, the rule was made available through the Internet by the Office of the Federal Register and USDA. A 15-day comment period ending July 24, 2003, was provided to allow interested persons to respond to the proposal. No comments were received.

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 that good cause exists for not postponing the effective date of this rule until 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register** because the 2003–2004 fiscal period began on July 1, 2003, and the order requires that the rate of assessment for each fiscal period apply to all assessable onions handled during such fiscal

period. In addition, the Committee needs sufficient funds to pay its expenses which are incurred on a continuous basis. Further, handlers are aware of this action which was recommended by the Committee at a public meeting and is similar to other assessment rate actions issued in past years. Also, a 15-day comment period was provided for in the proposed rule and no comments were received.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 958

Onions, Marketing agreements, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

■ For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR part 958 is amended as follows:

PART 958—ONIONS GROWN IN CERTAIN DESIGNATED COUNTIES IN IDAHO, AND MALHEUR COUNTY, OREGON

■ 1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 958 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

■ 2. A new § 958.112 is added to read as follows:

§ 958.112 Fiscal period.

The fiscal period shall begin July 1 of each year and end June 30 of the following year, both dates inclusive.

■ 3. Section 958.240 is revised to read as follows:

§ 958.240 Assessment rate.

On and after July 1, 2003, an assessment rate of \$0.095 per hundredweight is established for Idaho-Eastern Oregon onions.

Dated: August 8, 2003.

A.J. Yates,
Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 03–20691 Filed 8–13–03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

10 CFR Parts 1015 and 1018

RIN 1901–AA98

Collection of Claims Owed the United States

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Direct final rule.

SUMMARY: This direct final rule adopts revisions to the regulations on Collection of Claims Owed the United States to conform to the Federal Claims Collection Standards issued by the Department of the Treasury and the

Department of Justice. The revisions clarify and simplify the Department of Energy's debt collection standards and reflect changes to Federal debt collection procedures that were made by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 and the General Accounting Office Act of 1996.

DATES: This direct final rule will be effective November 12, 2003 without further action, unless significant adverse comment is received by September 15, 2003. If significant adverse comment is received, the Department will publish a timely withdrawal of the rule in the **Federal Register**. (See also "Discussion of Direct Final Rulemaking" in Section III of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this notice.)

ADDRESSES: All comments should be addressed to Helen O. Sherman, Director, Office of Finance and Accounting Policy (ME–10); Office of Management, Budget and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Philip R. Pegnato, Team Leader, Management Accounting and Cash Management Team, U.S. Department of Energy, at (301) 903–9704; or Susan A. Donahue, Accountant, Management Accounting and Cash Management Team, U.S. Department of Energy, at (301) 903–4666.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The Department of Energy (DOE) today revises and consolidates its debt collection regulations that are codified at 10 CFR parts 1015 and 1018. The principal purpose of this rulemaking is to conform DOE's regulations to the government-wide debt collection regulations that were published by the Treasury and Justice Departments (65 FR 70390, November 22, 2000). Consistent with that purpose, today's revised regulations largely track the wording of the government-wide regulations. Any significant differences are discussed below. The Secretary of Energy has approved the revised regulations for application to all divisions of DOE including the National Nuclear Security Administration.

More specifically, this rulemaking is intended:

(a) To reflect changes to Federal debt collection procedures made by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (DCIA), Public Law 104–134, 110 Stat. 1321, 1358 (April 26, 1996) as part of the Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996; and the publication of the revised Federal