

grower revenue could range between 1.4 and 2 percent.

This action decreases the assessment obligation imposed on handlers. Assessments are applied uniformly on all handlers, and some of the costs may be passed on to producers. However, decreasing the assessment rate reduces the burden on handlers, and may reduce the burden on producers. In addition, the Board's meeting was widely publicized throughout the walnut industry and all interested persons were invited to attend the meeting and participate in Board deliberations on all issues. Like all Board meetings, the September 12, 2003, meeting was a public meeting and all entities, both large and small, were able to express views on this issue. Finally, interested persons are invited to submit information on the regulatory and informational impacts of this action on small businesses.

This action imposes no additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements on either small or large California walnut 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 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 Board 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 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 2003–04 marketing year began on August 1, 2003, and the order requires that the rate of assessment for each marketing year apply to all merchantable walnuts handled during the year; (2) this action decreases the assessment rate for

merchantable California walnuts; (3) handlers are aware of this action which was unanimously recommended by the Board at a public meeting and is similar to other assessment rate actions issued in past years; 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 984

Walnuts, Marketing agreements, Nuts, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

■ For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR part 984 is amended as follows:

PART 984—WALNUTS GROWN IN CALIFORNIA

■ 1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 984 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

■ 2. Section 984.347 is revised to read as follows:

§ 984.347 Assessment rate.

On and after August 1, 2003, an assessment rate of \$0.0101 per kernelweight pound is established for California merchantable walnuts.

Dated: November 14, 2003.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

16 CFR Part 305

Rule Concerning Disclosures Regarding Energy Consumption and Water Use of Certain Home Appliances and Other Products Required Under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (“Appliance Labeling Rule”)

AGENCY: Federal Trade Commission.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Federal Trade Commission (“Commission”) announces that the current ranges of comparability for refrigerators, refrigerator-freezers, and freezers will remain in effect until further notice.

EFFECTIVE DATES: February 19, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Hampton Newsome, Attorney, Division of Enforcement, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, DC 20580, (202–326–2889); hnewsome@ftc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Rule was issued by the Commission in 1979,

44 FR 66466 (Nov. 19, 1979), in response to a directive in the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (“EPCA”).¹ The Rule covers several categories of major household appliances including refrigerators, refrigerator-freezers, and freezers.

I. Background

The Rule requires manufacturers of all covered appliances to disclose specific energy consumption or efficiency information (derived from the DOE test procedures) at the point of sale in the form of an “EnergyGuide” label, fact sheets (for some appliances), and in catalogs. The Rule requires manufacturers to include, on labels and fact sheets, an energy consumption or efficiency figure and a “range of comparability.” This range shows the highest and lowest energy consumption or efficiencies for all comparable appliance models so consumers can compare the energy consumption or efficiency of other models similar to the labeled model. The Rule also requires manufacturers to include, on labels for some products, including those that are the subject of this notice, a secondary energy usage disclosure in the form of an estimated annual operating cost based on a specified DOE national average cost for the fuel the appliance uses.

Section 305.8(b) of the Rule requires manufacturers, after filing an initial report, to report certain information annually to the Commission by specified dates for each product type.² These reports, which are to assist the Commission in preparing the ranges of comparability, contain the estimated annual energy consumption or energy efficiency ratings for the appliances derived from tests performed pursuant to the DOE test procedures. Because manufacturers regularly add new models to their lines, improve existing models, and drop others, the data base from which the ranges of comparability are calculated is constantly changing. To keep the required information on labels consistent with these changes, the Commission will publish new ranges if an analysis of the new information indicates that the upper or lower limits of the ranges have changed by more than 15%. Otherwise, the Commission

¹ 42 U.S.C. 6294. The statute also requires the Department of Energy (“DOE”) to develop test procedures that measure how much energy the appliances use, and to determine the representative average cost a consumer pays for the different types of energy available.

² Reports for refrigerators, refrigerator-freezers, and freezers are due August 1.