

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 68, No. 241

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. No. FV04-901-1NC]

Notice of Request for Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), this notice announces the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) intention to request an extension for and revision to a currently approved generic information collection for vegetables and specialty crop marketing order programs.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by February 17, 2004.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS: Contact Valerie L. Emmer-Scott, Marketing Specialist, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 0237, room 2525-S., Washington, DC 20090-6456; Tel: (202) 205-2829, Fax: (202) 720-5698, or E-mail: moabdocket_clerk@usda.gov.

Small businesses may request information on this notice by contacting Jay Guerber, Regulatory Fairness Representative, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 0237, room 2525-S., Washington, DC 20090-6456; telephone (202) 720-2491, Fax: (202) 720-5698, or E-mail: Jay.Gueber@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Vegetable and Specialty Crop Marketing Orders.

OMB Number: 0581-0178.

Expiration Date of Approval: April 30, 2004.

Type of Request: Extension and revision of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: Marketing order programs provide an opportunity for producers of fresh fruit, vegetables, and specialty crops, in specified production areas, to work together to solve marketing problems that cannot be solved individually. Order regulations help ensure adequate supplies of high quality products for consumers and adequate returns to producers. Under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (Act), as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), industries enter into marketing order programs. The Secretary of Agriculture (Secretary) is authorized to oversee the order operations and issue regulations recommended by a committee or board of representatives from each commodity industry.

The information collection requirements in this request are essential to carry out the intent of the Act, to provide the respondents the type of service they request, and to administer the marketing order programs. Under the Act, orders may authorize the following: production and marketing research including paid advertising, volume regulations, reserves including pools and producer allotments, container regulations, and quality control. Assessments are levied on handlers regulated under the marketing orders. Also pursuant to section 8e of the Act, importers of raisins, dates, and dried prunes are required to submit certain information.

Several forms are required to be filed by USDA to enable its administration of each program. These include forms covering the section process for industry members to serve on a marketing order's committee or board and ballots used in referenda to amend or continue marketing order programs.

Under Federal marketing orders, producers and handlers are nominated by their peers to serve as representatives on a committee or board which administers each program. Nominees must provide information on their qualifications to serve on the committee or board. Nominees are selected by the Secretary. Formal rulemaking amendments must be approved in referenda conducted by USDA and the

Secretary. For the purposes of this action, ballots are considered information collections and are subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. If an order is amended, handlers are asked to sign an agreement indicating their willingness to abide by the provisions of the amended order.

Some forms are required to be filed with the committee or board. The orders and their rules and regulations authorize the respective commodities' committees and boards, the agencies responsible for local administration of the orders, to require handlers and producers to submit certain information. Much of the information is compiled in aggregate and provided to the respective industries to assist in marketing decisions. The committees and boards have developed forms as a means for persons to file required information relating to supplies, shipments, and dispositions of their respective commodities, and other information needed to effectively carry out the purpose of the Act and their respective orders, and these forms are utilized accordingly.

OMB Control No. 0581-0071, Almonds Grown in California, Marketing Order No. 981, will also be merged into this information collection.

The forms covered under this information collection require the minimum information necessary to effectively carry out the requirements of the orders, and their use is necessary to fulfill the intent of the Act as expressed in the orders, and the rules and regulations issued under the orders.

The information collected is used only by authorized employees of the committees and boards and authorized representatives of the USDA, including AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs' regional and headquarter's staff. Authorized committee/board employees are the primary users of the information and AMS is the secondary user.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.086 hours per response.

Respondents: Producers, handlers, processors and importers.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 23,753.

Estimated Number of Responses: 163,709.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 7.195