

assessable onions for the 2001–02 fiscal period is estimated at 7.5 million 50-pound equivalents. Thus, the \$0.05 rate should provide \$375,000 in assessment income. Income derived from handler assessments, along with interest income and funds from the Committee's authorized reserve, would be adequate to cover budgeted expenses.

The major expenditures recommended by the Committee for the 2001–02 fiscal period include \$75,190 for administrative expenses, \$30,000 for compliance, \$254,000 for promotion, and \$90,000 for research projects. Budgeted expenses for these items in 2000–01 were \$87,109, \$27,498, \$39,500, and \$122,200, respectively. In addition, \$30,435 was expended for a retirement package for the outgoing Committee manager.

The Committee recommended the increased rate to fund a major market development program to promote the consumption of South Texas onions, without having to draw a large amount from reserves. Without the increase, the Committee's reserve fund would drop to \$52,576. The Committee believes that a reserve that low is not adequate for its operations.

The Committee reviewed and recommended 2001–02 expenditures of \$449,189, which included increases in research and promotion programs. Prior to arriving at this budget, the Committee considered information from various sources, including the Committee's Executive Committee, the Research Subcommittee, and the Market Development Subcommittee. Alternative expenditure levels were discussed by these groups, based upon the relative value of various research and promotion projects to the onion industry. The assessment rate of \$0.05 per 50-pound equivalent of assessable onions was then determined by dividing the total recommended budget by the quantity of assessable onions, estimated at 7.5 million 50-pound equivalents for the 2001–02 fiscal period. This is approximately \$74,190 below the anticipated expenses, which the Committee determined to be acceptable.

A review of historical information and preliminary information pertaining to the upcoming fiscal period indicates that the grower price for the 2001–02 fiscal period could range between \$6 and \$11 per 50-pound equivalent of onions. Therefore, the estimated assessment revenue for the 2001–02 fiscal period as a percentage of total grower revenue could range between 0.45 and 0.83 percent.

This action would increase the assessment obligation imposed on handlers. While assessments impose

some additional costs on handlers, the costs are minimal and uniform on all handlers. Some of the additional costs may be passed on to producers. However, these costs would be offset by the benefits derived by the operation of the marketing order. In addition, the Committee's meeting was widely publicized throughout the South Texas onion industry and all interested persons were invited to attend the meeting and participate in Committee deliberations on all issues. Like all Committee meetings, the October 10, 2001, 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 proposed rule would impose no additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements on either small or large production area commodity 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.

A 30-day comment period is provided to allow interested persons to respond to this proposed rule. Thirty days is deemed appropriate because: (1) The 2001–02 fiscal period began on August 1, 2001, and the marketing order requires that the rate of assessment for each fiscal period apply to all assessable onions handled during such fiscal period; (2) the Committee needs to have sufficient funds to pay its expenses which are incurred on a continuous basis; and (3) 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.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 959

Marketing agreements, Onions, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR part 959 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 959—ONIONS GROWN IN SOUTH TEXAS

1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 959 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

2. Section 959.237 is revised to read as follows:

§ 959.237 Assessment rate.

On and after August 1, 2001, an assessment rate of \$0.05 per 50-pound container or equivalent is established for South Texas onions.

Dated: January 3, 2002.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 02–575 Filed 1–9–02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 979

[Docket No. FV02–979–1 PR]

Melons Grown in South Texas; Increased Assessment Rate

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: This rule would increase the assessment rate established for the South Texas Melon Committee (Committee) for the 2001–02 and subsequent fiscal periods from \$0.05 to \$0.06 per carton of melons handled. The Committee locally administers the marketing order which regulates the handling of melons grown in South Texas. Authorization to assess melon handlers enables the Committee to incur expenses that are reasonable and necessary to administer the program. The fiscal period begins October 1 and ends September 30. The assessment rate would remain in effect indefinitely unless modified, suspended, or terminated.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 11, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this rule. Comments must be sent to the Docket Clerk, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, room 2525–S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090–6456; Fax: (202) 720–8938, or E-mail: moab.docketclerk@usda.gov. Comments should reference the docket number and the date and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register** and

will be available for public inspection in the Office of the Docket Clerk during regular business hours, or can be viewed at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/moab.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Belinda G. Garza, Regional Manager, McAllen Marketing Field Office, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1313 E. Hackberry, McAllen, Texas 78501; telephone: (956) 682-2833, Fax: (956) 682-5942; or George Kelhart, Technical Advisor, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, room 2525-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456; telephone: (202) 720-2491, Fax: (202) 720-8938.

Small businesses may request information on complying with this regulation by contacting Jay Guerber, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, room 2525-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456; telephone: (202) 720-2491, Fax: (202) 720-8938, or E-mail: Jay.Guerber@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule is issued under Marketing Agreement No. 156 and Order No. 979 (7 CFR part 979), regulating the handling of melons grown in South Texas, hereinafter referred to as the "order." The order is effective under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), hereinafter referred to as the "Act."

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) is issuing this rule in conformance with Executive Order 12866.

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. Under the marketing order now in effect, South Texas melon handlers are subject to assessments. Funds to administer the order are derived from such assessments. It is intended that the assessment rate as proposed herein would be applicable to all assessable melons beginning on October 1, 2001, and continue until amended, suspended, or terminated. This rule will not preempt any State or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule.

The Act provides that administrative proceedings must be exhausted before parties may file suit in court. Under section 608c(15)(A) of the Act, any handler subject to an order may file with USDA a petition stating that the order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with law and request a modification of the order

or to be exempted therefrom. Such handler is afforded the opportunity for a hearing on the petition. After the hearing USDA would rule on the petition. The Act provides that the district court of the United States in any district in which the handler is an inhabitant, or has his or her principal place of business, has jurisdiction to review USDA's ruling on the petition, provided an action is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

This rule would increase the assessment rate established for the Committee for the 2001-02 and subsequent fiscal periods from \$0.05 to \$0.06 per carton of melons.

The South Texas melon marketing order provides authority for the Committee, with the approval of USDA, to formulate an annual budget of expenses and collect assessments from handlers to administer the program. The members of the Committee are growers and handlers of South Texas melons. They are familiar with the Committee's needs and with the costs for goods and services in their local area and are thus in a position to formulate an appropriate budget and assessment rate. The assessment rate is formulated and discussed in a public meeting. Thus, all directly affected persons have an opportunity to participate and provide input.

For the 1999-2000 and subsequent fiscal periods, the Committee recommended, and USDA approved, an assessment rate that would continue in effect from fiscal period to fiscal period unless modified, suspended, or terminated by USDA upon recommendation and information submitted by the Committee or other information available to USDA.

The Committee, met on September 25, 2001, and unanimously recommended 2001-02 expenses of \$90,888 for personnel, office, compliance, and partial market development expenses. The assessment rate and specific funding for research and promotion projects were to be recommended at a later Committee meeting.

The Committee subsequently met on November 8, 2001, and unanimously recommended 2001-02 expenditures of \$314,388 and an assessment rate of \$0.06 per carton of melons. In comparison, last year's budgeted expenditures were \$241,460. The assessment rate of \$0.06 is \$0.01 higher than the rate currently in effect. The Committee recommended the increased rate to fund a major market development program to promote the consumption of South Texas melons, without having to draw a large amount

from reserves. Without the increase, the Committee's reserve fund would drop to \$194,687, which is lower than what the Committee needs for operations. This amount is derived by taking the current reserve (\$327,200), adding the \$166,875 in assessment income based on the old rate (3,337,500 cartons $\times$ \$0.05 per carton) and anticipated interest totaling \$15,000, and then subtracting the 2001-02 budget of \$314,388. With the new rate, \$200,250 in assessment income would be generated, and the reserve fund would only drop to \$228,062.

The major expenditures recommended by the Committee for the 2001-02 fiscal period include \$60,888 for administrative expenses, \$20,000 for compliance, \$137,000 for market development, and \$96,500 for research projects. Budgeted expenses for these items in 2000-01 were \$70,351, \$21,604, \$25,000, and \$96,500, respectively.

The assessment rate recommended by the Committee was derived by considering anticipated expenses, expected shipments of South Texas melons, anticipated interest income, and the amount of funds in the Committee's operating reserve. Melon shipments for the fiscal period are estimated at 3,337,500 cartons, which should provide \$200,250 in assessment income at the \$0.06 per carton rate. Income derived from handler assessments, along with interest income and funds from the Committee's authorized reserve, would be adequate to cover budgeted expenses for the 2001-02 fiscal period. Funds in the reserve (currently \$327,200) would be kept within the maximum permitted by the order (approximately two fiscal periods' expenses, \$979.44).

The proposed assessment rate would continue in effect indefinitely unless modified, suspended, or terminated by USDA upon recommendation and information submitted by the Committee or other available information.

Although this assessment rate would be in effect for an indefinite period, the Committee would continue to meet prior to or during each fiscal period to recommend a budget of expenses and consider recommendations for modification of the assessment rate. The dates and times of Committee meetings are available from the Committee or USDA. Committee meetings are open to the public and interested persons may express their views at these meetings. USDA would evaluate Committee recommendations and other available information to determine whether modification of the assessment rate is needed. Further rulemaking would be

undertaken as necessary. The Committee's 2001–02 budget and those for subsequent fiscal periods would be reviewed and, as appropriate, approved by USDA.

Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

Pursuant to requirements set forth in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has considered the economic impact of this rule on small entities. Accordingly, AMS has prepared this initial regulatory flexibility analysis.

The purpose of the RFA is to fit regulatory actions to the scale of business subject to such actions in order that small businesses will not be unduly or disproportionately burdened. Marketing orders issued pursuant to the Act, and the rules issued thereunder, are unique in that they are brought about through group action of essentially small entities acting on their own behalf. Thus, both statutes have small entity orientation and compatibility.

There are approximately 33 growers of melons in the production area and approximately 22 handlers subject to regulation under the marketing order. Small agricultural growers are defined by the Small Business Administration (SBA) (13 CFR 121.201) as those having annual receipts less than \$750,000, and small agricultural service firms are defined as those whose annual receipts are less than \$5,000,000.

Most of the handlers are vertically integrated corporations involved in growing, shipping, and marketing melons. For the 2000–01 marketing year, the industry's 22 handlers shipped melons produced on 6,979 acres with the average and median volume handled being 192,450 and 84,532 cartons, respectively. In terms of production value, total revenue for the 22 handlers was estimated to be \$37,478,447, with the average and median revenues being \$1,703,566 and \$748,273, respectively.

The South Texas melon industry is characterized by growers and handlers whose farming operations generally involve more than one commodity, and whose income from farming operations is not exclusively dependent on the production of melons. Alternative crops provide an opportunity to utilize many of the same facilities and equipment not in use when the melon production season is complete. For this reason, typical melon growers and handlers either double-crop melons during other times of the year or produce alternate crops, like onions.

Based on the SBA's definition of small entities, the Committee estimates that half of the 22 handlers regulated by the order would be considered small

entities if only their spring melon revenues are considered. However, revenues from other productive enterprises would likely push a large number of these handlers above the \$5,000,000 annual receipt threshold. Of the 33 growers within the production area, few have sufficient acreage to generate sales in excess of \$750,000; therefore, the majority of growers may be classified as small entities.

This rule would increase the assessment rate established for the Committee and collected from handlers for the 2001–02 and subsequent fiscal periods from \$0.05 to \$0.06 per carton of melons. The Committee unanimously recommended 2001–02 expenditures of \$314,388 and the assessment rate of \$0.06 per carton of melons. In comparison, last year's budgeted expenditures were \$241,460. The proposed assessment rate of \$0.06 is \$0.01 higher than the rate currently in effect. At the rate of \$0.06 per carton and an estimated 2001–02 melon production of 3,337,500 cartons, the projected income derived from handler assessments (\$200,250), along with interest and funds from the Committee's authorized reserve, would be adequate to cover budgeted expenses.

The major expenditures recommended by the Committee for the 2001–02 fiscal period include \$60,888 for administrative expenses, \$20,000 for compliance, \$137,000 for market development, and \$96,500 for research projects. Budgeted expenses for these items in 2000–01 were \$70,351, \$21,604, \$25,000, and \$96,500, respectively.

The Committee recommended the increased rate to fund a major market development program to promote the consumption of South Texas melons, without having to draw a large amount from reserves. Without the increase, the Committee's reserve fund would drop to \$194,687, which is lower than what the Committee needs for operations. With the increased rate, the reserve fund would drop to \$228,062.

The Committee voted to increase its assessment rate because the current rate would reduce the Committee's reserve funds beyond the level acceptable to the Committee. Assessment income, along with interest and funds from the Committee's authorized reserve, would provide the Committee with adequate funds to meet its 2001–02 fiscal period's expenses.

The Committee reviewed and unanimously recommended 2001–02 expenditures of \$314,388, which included an increase in its market development program. Prior to arriving at this budget, the Committee

considered information from various sources, including the Research and the Market Development Subcommittee. Alternative expenditure levels were discussed by these groups, based upon the relative value of various research and market development projects to the melon industry. The assessment rate of \$0.06 per carton of assessable melons was then determined by considering the total recommended budget, the quantity of assessable melons estimated at 3,337,500 cartons for the 2001–02 fiscal period, anticipated interest income, and the funds in the Committee's operating reserve. The recommended rate will generate \$200,250, which is \$114,138 below the anticipated expenses. The Committee found this acceptable because interest and reserve funds will be used to make up the deficit.

A review of historical information and preliminary information pertaining to the upcoming fiscal period indicates that the grower price for the 2001–02 marketing season could range between \$7 and \$11 per carton of cantaloupes and between \$6 and \$10 per carton of honeydew melons. Therefore, the estimated assessment revenue for the 2001–02 fiscal period as a percentage of total grower revenue could range between 0.9 and 0.5 percent for cantaloupes and between 1.0 and 0.6 percent for honeydew melons.

This action would increase the assessment obligation imposed on handlers. While assessments impose some additional costs on handlers, the costs are minimal and uniform on all handlers. Some of the additional costs may be passed on to growers. However, these costs would be offset by the benefits derived by the operation of the marketing order. In addition, the Committee's meeting was widely publicized throughout the South Texas melon industry and all interested persons were invited to attend the meeting and participate in Committee deliberations on all issues. Like all Committee meetings, the November 8, 2001, 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 proposed rule would impose no additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements on either small or large South Texas melon 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.

A 30-day comment period is provided to allow interested persons to respond to this proposed rule. Thirty days is deemed appropriate because: (1) The 2001–02 fiscal period began on October 1, 2001, and the marketing order requires that the rate of assessment for each fiscal period apply to all assessable melons handled during such fiscal period; (2) the Committee needs to have sufficient funds to pay its expenses which are incurred on a continuous basis; and (3) handlers are aware of this action which was unanimously recommended by the Committee at a public meeting and is similar to other assessment rate actions issued in past years.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 979

Marketing agreements, Melons, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR part 979 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 979—MELONS GROWN IN SOUTH TEXAS

1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 979 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

2. Section 979.219 is revised to read as follows:

§ 979.219 Assessment rate.

On and after October 1, 2001, an assessment rate of \$0.06 per carton is established for South Texas melons.

Dated: January 3, 2002.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 02–577 Filed 1–9–02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 71

[Airspace Docket No. 01–AEA–27]

Proposed Establishment of Class E Airspace; Cecil County Airport (K58M), Elkton, MD

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: This action proposes to establish Class E airspace at Cecil County Airport, (K58M), Elkton, MD. The development of Standard Instrument Approach Procedures (SIAP) at Cecil County Airport, Elkton, MD has made this proposal necessary. Sufficient controlled airspace extending upward from 700 feet Above Ground Level (AGL) is needed to contain aircraft executing an instrument approach. The area would be depicted on aeronautical charts for pilot reference.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 11, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Send comments on the proposal in triplicate to: Manager, Airspace Branch, AEA–520, Docket No. 01–AEA–27, Eastern Region, 1 Aviation Plaza, Jamaica, NY 11434–4809.

The official docket may be examined in the Office of the Regional Counsel, AEA–7, F.A.A. Eastern Region, 1 Aviation Plaza, Jamaica, NY 11434–4809. An informal docket may also be examined during normal business hours in the Airspace Branch, AEA–520, F.A.A. Eastern Region, 1 Aviation Plaza, Jamaica, NY 11434–4809.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Francis T. Jordan, Jr., Airspace specialist, Airspace Branch, AEA–520 Eastern Region, 1 Aviation Plaza, Jamaica, NY 11434–4809; telephone: (718) 553–4521.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested parties are invited to participate in this proposed rulemaking by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Comments that provide the factual basis supporting the views and suggestions presented are particularly helpful in developing reasoned regulatory decisions on the proposal. Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy-related aspects of the proposal. Communications should identify the airspace docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address

listed above. Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments on this action must submit with those comments a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: “Comments to Airspace Docket No. 01–AEA–27” The postcard will be date/time stamped and returned to the commenter. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposal contained in this action may be changed in light of comments received. All comments submitted will be available for examination in the Rules Docket both before and after the closing date for comments. A report summarizing each substantive public contact with the FAA personnel concerned with this rulemaking will be filed in the docket.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) by submitting a request to the Office of the Regional Counsel, AEA–7, F.A.A. Eastern Region, 1 Aviation Plaza, Jamaica, NY, 11434–4809. Communications must identify the docket number of this NPRM. Persons interested in being placed on a mailing list for future NPRMs should also request a copy of Advisory Circular No. 11–2A, which describes the application procedure.

The Proposal

The FAA is considering an amendment to Part 71 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR Part 71) to establish Class E airspace area at K58M airport. The development of Standard Instrument Approach Procedures (SIAP) at Cecil County Airport, Elkton, MD has made this proposal necessary. Class E airspace designations for airspace areas extending upward from 700 feet or more above the surface of the earth are published in Paragraph 6005 of FAA Order 7400.9J dated August 31 2001, and effective September 16, 2001, which is incorporated by reference in 14 CFR 71.1 The Class E airspace designation listed in this document would be published subsequently in the Order.

The FAA has determined that this proposed regulation only involves an established body of technical regulations for which frequent and routine amendments are necessary to keep them operationally current. Therefore, this proposed regulation—(1) is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a “significant rule” under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44