

# Notices

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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

[Docket No. FV96-989-2NC]

#### 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 of a currently approved information collection for Raisins Produced from Grapes Grown in California, Marketing Order No. 989.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by October 21, 1996 to be assured of consideration.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS:** Contact Valerie L. Emmer, Marketing Specialist, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, room 2530-S., P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; Tel: (202) 205-2829, Fax (202) 720-5698.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Title:* Raisins Produced from Grapes Grown in California, Marketing Order No. 989.

*OMB Number:* 0581-0083.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* March 31, 1997.

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

*Abstract:* Marketing order programs provide an opportunity for producers of fresh fruits, vegetables and specialty crops, in a specified production area, to work together to solve marketing problems that cannot be solved

individually. Order regulations help ensure adequate supplies of high quality product and adequate returns to producers. Under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (AMAA), as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), marketing order programs are established if favored by producers in referenda. The handling of the commodity is regulated. The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to oversee order operations and issue regulations recommended by a committee of representatives from each commodity industry.

The information collection requirements in this request are essential to carry out the intent of the AMAA, to provide the respondents the type of service they request, and to administer the California raisin marketing order program, which has been operating since 1949.

The California raisin marketing order authorizes the issuance of grade and condition standards, inspection requirements, and volume regulations through a producer reserve pool. The producer reserve pool raisins are sold through the export incentive and merchandising programs, government purchases of raisins, sales pursuant to the order, and a raisin diversion program. Regulatory provisions apply to raisins shipped both within and out of the production area to any market, except those specifically exempt. This order also has authority for market research and development projects, including paid advertising. Pursuant to Section 608(e)(1) of the AMAA, import grade and condition requirements are implemented on raisins imported into the United States.

The order, and rules and regulations issued thereunder, authorize the Raisin Administrative Committee (Committee), the agency responsible for local administration of the order, to require handlers and processors to submit certain information. In addition, raisin producers who voluntarily apply to participate in a raisin diversion program are required to submit certain information. Under the AMAA, importers are also required to submit certain information. Much of this information is compiled in aggregate and provided to the industry to assist in marketing decisions.

The Committee has developed forms as a convenience to persons who are

required to file information with the Committee relating to raisin inventories, acquisition of standard raisins, shipments, dispositions, and other information needed to carry out the purposes of the Act and the Order. Since shipments of raisins continue year-round, these forms are utilized throughout the crop year. A USDA form is used to allow producers to vote on amendments to or continuance of the marketing order. In addition, raisin producers and handlers who are nominated by their peers to serve as representatives on the Committee must file nomination forms with the Secretary.

Formal rulemaking amendments to the order must be approved in referenda conducted by the Secretary. Also, the Secretary may conduct a continuance referendum to determine industry support for continuation of the order. Such referenda ballots are included in this request.

These forms require the minimum information necessary to effectively carry out the requirements of the order, and their use is necessary to fulfill the intent of the Act as expressed in the order.

The information collected is used only by authorized representatives of the USDA, including AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Division regional and headquarter's staff, and authorized employees of the Committee. Authorized Committee employees and the industry 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 0.14715 hours per response.

*Respondents:* California raisin producers, handlers, processors, and importers.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 1,084.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* 14.095.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 2584 hours.

Comments are invited on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information

including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments should reference OMB No. 0581-0083 and the California Raisin Marketing Order No. 989, and be sent to USDA in care of Valerie L. Emmer at the address above. All comments received will be available for public inspection during regular business hours at the same address.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated: August 16, 1996.

Robert C. Keeney,

*Director, Fruit and Vegetable Division.*

[FR Doc. 96-21330 Filed 8-20-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

## Commodity Credit Corporation

### Farmland Protection Program

**AGENCY:** Commodity Credit Corporation, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

**ACTION:** Notice of Request of Proposals (RFP).

**SUMMARY:** Section 388 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (the 1996 Act) established the Farmland Protection Program (FPP). The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) administers the FPP under the general supervision of the Vice President of the CCC who is the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). CCC is requesting proposals from States, Tribes, and units of local government to cooperate in the acquisition of conservation easements or other interests in prime, unique, or other productive soil for the purpose of limiting non-agricultural uses of that land.

**DATES:** Proposals must be received by September 13, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Please send proposals to Ann E. Carey, Director, Community Assistance and Resource Development Division, Natural Resources Conservation Service, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, DC 20013-2890. Fax: 202-690-0639; e-mail: [acarey@usda.gov](mailto:acarey@usda.gov). Attention: FPPRFP.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ann E. Cary, Director, Community Assistance and Resource Development Division, Natural Resources Conservation Service, phone: 202-720-2847; fax: 202-690-0639; e-mail: [acarey@usda.gov](mailto:acarey@usda.gov). Attention: FPP.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Availability of Funding in Fiscal Year 1996

Effective on the date of publication of this notice, the CCC will accept proposals from States, Tribes, and units of local government that have pending offers with landowners for the acquisition of conservation easements or other interests in land that contains prime, unique, or other productive soils. The pending offers must be for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land. CCC will evaluate the merits of the requests for participation utilizing criteria described in this notice and will enter into cooperative agreements with the States, Tribes, or units of local government that have proposals that CCC determines will effectively meet the objectives of the FPP. CCC must receive proposals for participation by September 13, 1996.

#### Background

According to the 1987 Census of Agriculture, one-third of the Nation's agricultural products are produced in metropolitan counties containing large cities. Another one-fourth of these agricultural products are produced in counties adjacent to significant urban populations. Historically, American settlements were located in areas where the land was most productive. Consequently, some of the Nation's most valuable and productive farmland is located in urban and developing areas. Nearly 85 percent of domestic fruit and vegetable production and 80 percent of our dairy products come from urban-influenced areas.

These areas are continually threatened by rapid development and urban sprawl. Several social and economic changes over the past three decades have influenced the rate at which land is converted to urban uses. Population growth and shifts in age distribution, the economy, and transportation have contributed to changes in agricultural land conversion rates. Urban sprawl has been a major cause of farmland development. Since 1960, an average of 1.5 million acres of farmland have been converted to other uses each year.

The gross acreage of farmland converted to urban development is not

necessarily the most troubling concern. A greater cause for concern is the quality of farmland that is being converted. In most States, prime farmland is being converted at 2 to 4 times the rate of other less-productive land. In addition, as development does occur, remaining acreage is placed under a greater environmental, economic, and social strain as agrarian and urbanizing interests compete. For the agricultural producer, increasing costs of production and liability risks are harmful byproducts of urban development. In addition, remaining acreage must be farmed more intensively, generating adverse impacts on water quality and soil health. For urban dwellers, issues such as pesticide overspray, animal nutrient odors, and noise are important concerns.

There is, therefore, an important national interest in the protection of farmland. Once developed, productive farmland with rich topsoil may be lost forever. Food security for the Nation must be taken into account. Agricultural lands are important components of historic landscapes and are equally important simply for their scenic beauty.

#### Legislative History

In the 1980 Farm Bill, Congress passed the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) (Pub. L. 97-98, Title XV, Subtitle I; 7 U.S.C. 4201-4209), which began the Federal government's effort to protect farmland from urbanization. Under this program, Federal agencies are required to evaluate the impacts of federally funded programs on converting farmland to non-agricultural uses, and consider alternative actions that would lessen the adverse impacts.

In 1990, Congress enacted the Farms for the Future (FFF) Act (Chapter 2, Subtitle E, Title XIV of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-624) which authorized the Agricultural Resource Conservation Demonstration Program. This program provided guaranteed loans and subsidized interest payments to help States finance farmland protection efforts. The USDA received funding appropriations for fiscal years 1992-94. Vermont was the only State to qualify for funding under FFF. No funds were appropriated for fiscal years 1995 and 1996. The program's statutory authority expires on September 30, 1996.

The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996

Enacted on April 4, 1996, section 388 of the 1996 Act directs the Secretary of Agriculture to establish and carry out the FPP. Under this program, the USDA