

Wage and Hour Division, Labor

§ 780.911

EXEMPT OPERATIONS ON FRUITS OR VEGETABLES

§ 780.906 Requisites for exemption generally.

Section 13(b)(16), in clause (A), provides an exemption from the overtime pay provision of the Act for an employee during any workweek in which all the following conditions are satisfied:

(a) The employee must be engaged “in the transportation and preparation for transportation of fruits and vegetables”; and

(b) Such transportation must be transportation “from the farm”; and

(c) The destination to which the fruits or vegetables are transported must be “a place of first processing or first marketing”; and

(d) The transportation must be from the farm to such destination “within the same State”.

§ 780.907 “Fruits or vegetables.”

The exempt operations of preparing for transportation and transporting must be performed with respect to “fruits or vegetables.” The intent of section 13(b)(16) is to exempt such operations on fruits or vegetables which are “just-harvested” and still in their raw and natural state. As explained at the time of adoption of the amendment on the floor of the House, the exemption was intended to eliminate the difference in treatment of farmers and nonfarmers with respect to exemption of such “handling or hauling of fruit or vegetables in their raw or natural state.” (See 107 Cong. Rec. (daily ed.) p. 4523.) Transporting and preparing for transportation other farm products which are not fruits or vegetables are not exempt under section 13(b)(16). For example, operations on livestock, eggs, tobacco, or poultry are nonexempt. Sugarcane is not a fruit or vegetable for purposes of this exemption (*Wirtz v. Osceola Farms Co.*, 372 F. 2d 584).

§ 780.908 Relation of employee’s work to specified transportation.

In order for the exemption to apply to an employee, he must be engaged “in the transportation and preparation for transportation” of the just-harvested fruits or vegetables from the

farm to the specified places within the same State. Engagement in other activities is not exempt work. The employee must be actually engaged in the described operations. The exemption is not available for other employees of the employer, such as office, clerical, and maintenance workers.

§ 780.909 “Transportation.”

“Transportation,” as used in section 13(b)(16), refers to the movement by any means of conveyance of fruits or vegetables from the farm to a place of first processing or first marketing in the same State. It includes only those activities which are immediately necessary to move the fruits or vegetables to the specified points and the return trips. Drivers, drivers’ helpers, loaders, and checkers perform work which is exempt. Transportation ends with delivery at the receiving platform of the place to which the fruits or vegetables are transported. (*Mitchell v. Budd*, 350 U.S. 473.) Thus, unloading at the delivery point by employees who did not transport the commodities would not be a part of the transportation activities under section 13(b)(16).

§ 780.910 Engagement in transportation and preparation.

Since transportation and preparation for transportation are both exempt activities, an employee who engages in both is performing exempt work. In referring to “the transportation and preparation for transportation” of the fruits or vegetables, the statute recognizes the two activities as interrelated parts of the single task of moving the commodities from the farm to the designated points. Accordingly, the word “and” between the words “transportation” and “preparation” is not considered to require that any employee be employed in both parts of the task in order to be exempt. The exemption may apply to an employee engaged either in transporting or preparing the commodities for transportation if he otherwise qualifies under section 13(b)(16).

§ 780.911 Preparation for transportation.

The “preparation for transportation” of fruits or vegetables includes only

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those activities which are necessary to prepare the fruits or vegetables for transportation from the farm to the places described in section 13(b)(16). These preliminary activities on the farm will vary with the commodity involved, with the means of the transportation to be used, and with the nature of operations to be performed on the commodity after delivery.

§ 780.912 Exempt preparation.

The following operations, if required in order to move the commodities from the farm and to deliver them to a place of first marketing or first processing, are considered preparation for transportation: Assembling, weighing, placing the fruits or vegetables in containers such as lugs, crates, boxes or bags, icing, marking, labeling or fastening containers, and moving the commodities from storage or concentration areas on the farm to loading sites.

§ 780.913 Nonexempt preparation.

(a) *Retail packing.* Since the exemption, as expressly stated in section 13(b)(16), includes the transportation of the fruits or vegetables only to places of first marketing or first processing, packing or preparing for retail or further distribution beyond the place of first processing or first marketing is not exempt as "preparation for transportation." (*Schultz v. Durrence* (D. Ga.), 19 WH Cases 747, 63 CCH Lab. Cas. secs. 32, 387.)

(b) *Preparation for market.* No exemption is provided under section 13(b)(16) for operations performed on the farm in preparation for market (such as ripening, cleaning, grading, or sorting) rather than in preparation for the transportation described in the section. Exemption, if any, for these activities should be considered under sections 13(a)(6) and 13(b)(12). (See subparts D and E of this part 780.)

(c) *Processing or canning.* Processing is not exempt preparation for transportation. Thus, the canning of fruits or vegetables is not under section 13(b)(16).

§ 780.914 "From the farm."

The exemption applies only to employees whose work relates to trans-

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portation of fruits or vegetables "from the farm." The phrase "from the farm" makes it clear that the preparation of the fruits or vegetables should be performed on the farm and that the first movement of the commodities should commence at the farm. A "farm" has been interpreted under the Act to mean a tract of land devoted to one or more of the primary branches of farming outlined in the definition of "agriculture" in section 3(f) of the Act. These expressly include the cultivation and tillage of the soil and the growing and harvesting of any agricultural or horticultural commodities.

§ 780.915 "Place of first processing."

Under section 13(b)(16) the fruits or vegetables may be transported to only two types of places. One is a "place of first processing", which includes any place where canning, freezing, drying, preserving, or other operations which first change the form of the fresh fruits or vegetables from their raw and natural state are performed. (For overtime exemption applicable to "first processing," see part 526 of this chapter.) A plant which grades and packs only is not a place of first processing (*Walling v. DeSoto Creamery and Produce Co.*, 51 F. Supp. 938). However, a packer's plant may qualify as a place of first marketing. (See § 780.916.)

§ 780.916 "Place of * * * first marketing."

A "place of * * * first marketing" is the second of the two types of places to which the freshly harvested fruits or vegetables may be transported from the farm under the exemption provided by section 13(b)(16). Typically, a place of first marketing is a farmer's market of the kind to which "delivery to market" is made within the meaning of section 3(f) of the Act when a farmer delivers such commodities there as an incident to or in conjunction with his own farming operations. Under section 13(b)(16), of course, there is no requirement that the transportation be performed by or for a farmer or as an incident to or in conjunction with any farming operations. A place of first marketing may be described in general terms as a place at which the freshly harvested fruits or vegetables brought