

§ 283.26

constitute the basis for the appeal including a statement as to whether a factual basis for good cause relief exists, and

(2) The nature of the relief sought.

(h) *FNS answer*. Upon service of the State agency appeal petition, FNS shall file an answer, pursuant to § 283.6, not later than 60 days after the State agency submits its appeal petition.

§ 283.26 Request that appeals be handled under procedures in subpart B for appeals of QC claims of \$50,000 or more.

(a) If, after the filing of its appeal petition, the State agency does not believe that the summary procedure provided in this subpart is adequate for handling the appeal and that an oral hearing is necessary, the State agency may file, no later than the date established for the conclusion of any discovery pursuant to § 283.29, a motion that its appeal be handled under the procedures in subpart B of this part.

(b) The motion shall specify why the State agency believes that the summary procedure is inadequate and what harm will result if an oral hearing is not held.

(c) FNS will have 10 days from service of the State agency's motion that the appeal be handled under subpart B of this part to submit arguments either in support of or against the State agency's position.

(d) The ALJ will review the State agency's motion and the information submitted by FNS and decide which procedures shall be used in the appeal.

§ 283.27 Procedures upon failure to file an answer.

The failure by FNS to file an answer shall constitute a waiver of the opportunity to file a cross motion for summary judgment pursuant to § 283.30. Upon such failure to file, the State agency shall file a proposed decision, along with a motion for adoption thereof, both of which shall be served upon FNS by the State agency. Within 10 days after service of such motion and proposed decision, FNS may file with the Hearing Clerk objections thereto. If the ALJ finds that meritorious objections have been filed, the State agency's motion shall be denied

with supporting reasons. If meritorious objections are not filed, the ALJ shall issue an initial decision without further procedures. Copies of the decision or denial of State agency's motion shall be served on each of the parties and shall be included as part of the official record. Where the decision as proposed by the State agency is adopted as the ALJ's initial decision, such decision of the ALJ shall become final and effective 30 days after service unless reconsideration or review by the Judicial Officer is sought as discussed in §§ 283.17(d) and 283.20.

§ 283.28 Discovery.

Upon motion and as ordered by the ALJ, written interrogatories, written requests for admissions and written requests for the production of documents, may be served by any party to the appeal upon any other party and used in accordance with § 283.12(b).

§ 283.29 Scheduling conference.

(a) *Time and place*. The ALJ shall direct the parties or their counsel to attend a scheduling conference following the filing of a notice of appeal pursuant to § 283.25. The scheduling conference shall be held at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC. Reasonable notice of the time and place of the scheduling conference shall be given. The ALJ may order each of the parties to furnish at the scheduling conference the following:

(1) An outline of the appeal or defense;

(2) The legal theories upon which the party will rely;

(3) Copies of or a list of documents that the party anticipates relying upon;

(b) *Procedures*. The ALJ shall not order any of the foregoing procedures that a party can show are inappropriate or unwarranted under the circumstances of the particular appeal.

(c) *Scheduling conference*. At the scheduling conference, the following matters shall be considered:

(1) The simplification of issues;

(2) The necessity of amendments to pleadings;

(3) Stipulations of facts and of the authenticity, accuracy, and admissibility of documents;