

## § 1214.54

would be required to submit satisfactory proof to the Board that the importer paid the assessment on exempt organic products.

(5) The exemption will apply immediately following the issuance of the exemption certificate.

### § 1214.54 Refund escrow accounts.

(a) The Board shall establish an interest bearing escrow account with a financial institution that is a member of the Federal Reserve System and will deposit into such account an amount equal to 10 percent of the assessments collected during the period beginning on the effective date of the Order and ending on the date the Secretary announces the results of the required referendum.

(b) If the Order is not approved by the required referendum, the Board shall promptly pay refunds of assessments to all producers and importers that have paid assessments during the period beginning on the effective date of the Order and ending on the date the Secretary announces the results of the required referendum in the manner specified in paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) If the amount deposited in the escrow account is less than the amount of all refunds that producers and importers subject to the Order have a right to receive, the Board shall prorate the amount deposited in such account among all producers and importers who desire a refund of assessments paid no later than 90 days after the required referendum results are announced by the Secretary.

(d) Any producer or importer requesting a refund shall submit an application on the prescribed form to the Board within 30 days after the announcement of the referendum results of their request for a refund of the assessments that they paid. The producers and importer requesting a refund shall also submit documentation to substantiate that assessments were paid. Any such demand shall be made by such producer or importer in accordance with the provisions of this subpart and in a manner consistent with regulations recommended by the Board and prescribed by the Secretary.

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(e) If the Order is approved by the required referendum conducted under § 1214.71 then:

(1) The escrow account shall be closed; and,

(2) The funds shall be available to the Board for disbursement under § 1214.50.

### PROMOTION, RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

### § 1214.60 Programs, plans, and projects.

(a) The Board shall receive and evaluate, or on its own initiative, develop and submit to the Secretary for approval any program, plan, or project authorized under this subpart. Such programs, plans, or projects shall provide for:

(1) The establishment, issuance, effectuation, and administration of appropriate programs for promotion, research, and information, including producer and consumer industry information, with respect to Christmas trees;

(2) The establishment and conduct of research with respect to the image, desirability, use, marketability, quality, product development or production of Christmas trees, to the end that the marketing and use of Christmas trees may be encouraged, expanded, improved, or made more acceptable and to advance the image, desirability, or quality of Christmas trees.

(b) A program, plan, or project may not be implemented prior to approval of the program, plan, or project by the Secretary. Once a program, plan, or project is so approved, the Board shall take appropriate steps to implement it.

(c) Each program, plan, or project implemented under this subpart shall be reviewed or evaluated periodically by the Board to ensure that it contributes to an effective program of promotion, research, or information. If it is found by the Board that any such program, plan, or project does not contribute to an effective program of promotion, research, or information, then the Board shall terminate such program, plan, or project.

### § 1214.61 Independent evaluation.

The Board shall, not less often than once every five years, authorize and fund, from funds otherwise available to