

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. TB-96-19]

National Advisory Committee for Tobacco Inspection Services; Meeting

In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) announcement is made of the following committee meeting:

Name: National Advisory Committee for Tobacco Inspection Services.

Date: April 17, 1996.

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Place: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Tobacco Division, 771 Corporate Drive, Suite 500, Lexington, Kentucky 40503-5480.

Purpose: To elect officers, review various regulations issued pursuant to the Tobacco Inspection Act (7 U.S.C. 511 *et seq.*) and to discuss the level of tobacco inspection services currently provided to producers by AMS. The Committee will recommend the desired level of services to be provided to producers by AMS and an appropriate fee structure to fund the recommended services for the 1996-97 selling season.

The meeting is open to the public. Persons, other than members, who wish to address the Committee at the meeting should contact the Director, Tobacco Division, AMS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 502 Annex Building, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456, (202) 205-0567, prior to the meeting. Written statements may be submitted to the Committee before, at, or after the meeting.

Dated: March 28, 1996.

Lon Hatamiya,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 96-8074 Filed 4-1-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

Forest Service

Olympic Provincial Interagency Executive Committee (PIEC), Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Olympic PIEC Advisory Committee will meet on April 26, 1996 at the Snider Work Center, 553 W. Snider Road, Forks, Washington. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. and continue until 3:30 p.m. Agenda items are: (1) Update on Economic Development Projects for 1996; (2) Forestry Training Center; (3) Jobs in the Woods Update; (4) Update on timber and other programs on the Soleduck District; (5) Status of Watershed Restoration 96 Projects; (6) Open Forum; and (7) Public Comments. All Olympic Province Advisory Committee Meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions regarding this meeting to Kathy Snow, Province Liaison, USDA, Quilcene Ranger District, P.O. Box 280, Quilcene, WA 98376, (360) 765-2211 or Ronald R. Humphrey, Forest Supervisor, at (360) 956-2301.

Dated: March 27, 1996.

Ronald R. Humphrey,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 96-7956 Filed 4-1-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

Extension of Certain Timber Sale Contracts and Deferral of Periodic Payments

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Periodically, lumber markets experience significant decreases in price. Purchasers of National Forest System timber are sometimes unable to harvest timber sales with high stumpage prices without incurring losses that threaten bankruptcy, mill closures, or severe economic losses. Government indices indicate a major downturn in the lumber market has occurred from fourth quarter of 1993 to the present. While many Forest Service timber sale contracts contain provisions to extent termination dates during severely declining markets, the mechanisms used in some areas of the country to measure severely declining markets do not appear to be performing as intended. Accordingly, the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and the Environment has determined that it is in the substantial overriding public interest to extend for 120 days certain

National Forest System timber sale contracts which terminate prior to August 1, 1995, while the Department considers alternatives to current procedures for contract term additions. In addition to extending contracts pursuant to the Under Secretary's finding, the Forest Service also will defer, for 120 days, periodic payments due on certain contracts prior to August 1, 1996, when such referral is requested by the timber sale purchaser. The intended effect is to minimize contract defaults, mill closures, and company bankruptcies.

DATE: The Under Secretary's determination was made on March 28, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rex Baumbach, Timber Management Staff, Forest Service, USDA, (202) 205-0855.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Forest Service sells timber from National Forest System lands to individuals or companies. Each sale is formalized by execution of a contract between the purchaser and the Forest Service. The contract sets forth the explicit terms and provisions of the sale, including such matters as the estimated volume of timber to be removed, period for removal, price to be paid to the Government, road construction and logging requirements, and environmental protection measures to be taken. The average contract period is approximately 3 years. Many sales, however, have contract terms of 1 or 2 years, while a few contracts have terms of 7 or 8 years.

The National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a(c)) provides that the Secretary of Agriculture shall not extent any timber sale contract period with an original term of 2 years or more, unless he finds that the purchaser has diligently performed in accordance with an approved plan of operations or that the "substantial overriding public interest" justifies the extension. On December 7, 1990, the Department adopted a final rule at 36 CFR 223.52 permitting, upon written request by purchasers, extension of those contracts requiring periodic payments when the agency determines that adverse wood product market conditions have resulted in a drastic reduction in wood product prices. Purchasers must request such extensions in writing for all subsequent consecutive quarters in which market price indices are depressed. That rule