the order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with law and request a modification of the order or to be exempted therefrom. A handler is afforded the opportunity for a hearing on the petition. After the hearing the Secretary would rule on the petition. The Act provides that the district court of the United States in any district in which the handler is an inhabitant, or has his or her principal place of business, has jurisdiction in equity to review the Secretary's ruling on the petition, provided a bill in equity is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

Pursuant to requirements set forth in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has considered the economic impact of this action on small entities.

The purpose of the RFA is to fit regulatory actions to the scale of business subject to such actions in order that small businesses would not be unduly or disproportionately burdened. Marketing orders issued pursuant to the Act, and rules issued thereunder, are unique in that they are brought about through group action of essentially small entities acting on their own behalf. Thus, both statutes have small entity orientation and compatibility.

There are approximately 40 handlers of Washington potatoes that are subject to regulation under the order and approximately 450 producers in the regulated production area. Small agricultural service firms, which include handlers of Washington potatoes, have been defined by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.601) as those whose annual receipts are less than $5,000,000, and small agricultural producers are defined as those whose annual receipts are less than $500,000. The majority of potato handlers and producers regulated under the marketing agreement and order may be classified as small entities.

Section 946.52 (7 CFR 946.52) authorizes the issuance of regulations for grade, size, quality, maturity, and pack for any variety or varieties of potatoes grown in different portions of the production area during any period.

Size regulations are currently in effect under section 946.336 in terms of minimum diameter and minimum weight. All Russet types must be 2⅛ inches minimum diameter or 4 ounces minimum weight during the period July 15 through August 31 each season, and 2 inches or 4 ounces during the remainder of the season. This rule amends section 946.336 by reducing the minimum diameter requirement for Russet type varieties from 2⅛ inches to 2 inches during the July 15 through August 31 period each season. Thus, the 2 inch minimum diameter or 4 ounce minimum weight would apply to Russet type potatoes throughout the entire season.

At its meeting on February 15, 1996, the Committee unanimously recommended reducing the minimum diameter requirement for Russet type varieties to 2 inches during the period July 15 through August 31, when early crop shipments are made.

When the current minimum diameter requirement for Russet type varieties was established, the Norgold Russet was the primary variety being grown for the early market, i.e., the months of July and August. This variety is more round in shape than those varieties grown for shipment later in the season. The newer varieties grown for the early market, such as the Norkotah Russet, are shaped the same as the varieties traditionally marketed later in the season. Thus, there is no need for a larger diameter requirement for earlier varieties. Therefore, the Committee recommended that all Russet type varieties be subject to the same minimum diameter requirement throughout the entire marketing season.

Reducing the minimum diameter would enable handlers to market a larger portion of the crop in fresh market outlets. This change is expected to improve the marketing of Washington potatoes and increase returns to producers.

Based on available information, the Administrator of the AMS has determined that this action would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

A 30-day comment period is provided to allow interested persons to respond to this proposal. All written comments timely received will be considered before a final determination is made on this matter.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 946

Marketing agreements, Potatoes, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, it is proposed that 7 CFR part 946 be amended as follows:

PART 946—IRISH POTATOES GROWN IN WASHINGTON

1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 946 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

2. Section 946.336 is amended by revising paragraph (a)(2)(ii) to read as follows:

§ 946.336 Handling regulation.

* * * * *

(a) * * *

(2) * * *

(ii) All Russet types, 2 inches (54.0 mm) minimum diameter, or 4 ounces minimum weight.

* * * * *

Dated: April 16, 1996.

Eric M. Forman,

Deputy Director, Fruit and Vegetable Division.

[FR Doc. 96–9832 Filed 4–19–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

---

7 CFR Part 1106

[DA–96–05]

Milk in the Southwest Plains Marketing Area; Proposed Suspension of Certain Provisions of the Order

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed suspension of rule.

SUMMARY: This document invites written comments on a proposal to suspend certain provisions of the Southwest Plains Federal milk marketing order (Order 106) for the period of September 1996 through August 1998. The proposal would suspend a portion of the supply plant shipping requirement and the touch-base requirement under Order 106 for a 2-year period. The action was requested by Kraft Foods, Inc. (Kraft), which contends the suspension is necessary to prevent the uneconomical and inefficient movement of milk and to ensure that producers historically associated with the market will continue to have their milk pooled under Order 106.

DATES: Comments are due no later than May 22, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Comments (two copies) should be filed with the USDA/AMS/Dairy Division, Order Formulation Branch, Room 2971, South Building, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090–6456.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nicholas Memoli, Marketing Specialist, USDA/AMS/Dairy Division, Order Formulation Branch, Room 2971, South Building, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090- 6456, (202) 690–1932.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601–612) requires the Agency to examine the impact of a proposed rule on small entities. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 605(b), the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service has certified that this proposed rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small

entities. Such rule would lessen the regulatory impact of the order on certain milk handlers and would tend to ensure that dairy farmers would continue to have their milk priced under the order and thereby receive the benefits that accrue from such pricing.

The Department is issuing this proposed rule in conformance with Executive Order 12866.

This proposed rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12778, Civil Justice Reform. This action is not intended to have a retroactive effect. If adopted, this proposed rule will not preempt any state or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with the rule.

The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601–674), provides that administrative proceedings must be exhausted before parties may file suit in court. Under section 608c(15)(A) of the Act, any handler subject to an order may file with the Secretary a petition stating that the order, any provisions of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with law and request a modification of the order or to be exempted from the order. A handler is afforded the opportunity for a hearing on the petition. After a hearing, the Secretary would rule on the petition. The Act provides that the district court of the United States in any district in which the handler is an inhabitant, or has its principal place of business, has jurisdiction in equity to review the Secretary's ruling on the petition, provided a bill in equity is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the provisions of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act, the suspension of the following provisions of the order regulating the handling of milk in the Southwest Plains marketing area is being considered for the period of September 1, 1996, through August 31, 1998:

In § 1106.6, the words ''during the month''.

In § 1106.7(b)(1), beginning with the words ''of February through August'' and continuing to the end of the paragraph.

In § 1106.13, paragraph (d)(1) in its entirety.

All persons who wish to send written data, views or arguments about the proposed suspension should send two copies of them to the USDA/AMS/Dairy Division, Order Formulation Branch, Room 2971, South Building, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090- 6456, by the 30th day after publication of this notice in the Federal Register.

All written submissions made pursuant to this notice will be made available for public inspection in the Dairy Division during regular business hours (7 CFR 1.27(b)).

Statement of Consideration

The proposed rule would suspend the requirement that producers ''touch-base'' at a pool plant with at least one day's production during the month before their milk is eligible for diversion to a nonpool plant. By suspending the touch-base provision, producer milk would not be required to be delivered to pool plants before going to unregulated manufacturing plants.

The proposed suspension would also allow a supply plant that has been associated with the Southwest Plains order during the months of September 1995 through January 1996 to qualify as a pool plant without shipping any milk to a pool distributing plant during the months of September 1996 through August 1998. Without the suspension, a supply plant would be required to ship 50 percent of its producer receipts to pool distributing plants during the months of September through January and 20 percent of its producer receipts to pool distributing plants during the months of February through August to qualify as a pool plant under the order.

According to Kraft's letter requesting the suspension, supplemental milk supplies will not be needed to meet the fluid needs of distributing plants. Kraft anticipates that there will be an adequate supply of direct-ship producer milk located in the general area of distributing plants available to meet the Class I needs of the market. Consequently, it states, there is no need to require producers located some distance from pool distributing plants to touch-base when their milk can more economically be diverted directly to manufacturing plants in the production area.

Accordingly, it may be appropriate to suspend the aforesaid provisions from September 1, 1996, through August 31, 1998.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 1106

Milk marketing orders.

The authority citation for 7 CFR Part 1106 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

Dated: April 9, 1996.

Lon Hatamiya,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 96–9831 Filed 4–19–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

10 CFR Part 430

[Docket No. EE–RM–94–230A]

Energy Conservation Program for Consumer Products: Test Procedure for Clothes Washers and Reporting Requirements for Clothes Washers, Clothes Dryers, and Dishwashers

AGENCY: Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy.

ACTION: Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE or Department) today is issuing a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking to expand the scope of the Department's proposed rule to amend the clothes washer test procedure used to test for compliance with the existing energy conservation standard. The Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) recommended an additional new test procedure that would apply to the anticipated future clothes washer energy conservation standards. The Department is reopening the comment period on its proposed rule to seek comments on whether it should adopt the AHAM recommended test procedure, with certain changes.

DATES: Written comments in response to this notice must be received by June 6, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Written comments, 10 copies, are to be submitted to: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, EE–43, Room 1J–018, ''Test Procedure for Clothes Washers and Reporting Requirements for Clothes Washers, Clothes Dryers, and Dishwashers,'' Docket No. EE–RM–94–230A, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20585, (202)–586–7574.

Copies of the transcript of the public hearing and the public comments received on the proposed rule, may be read and/or photocopied at the Department of Energy Freedom of Information Reading Room, U.S. Department of Energy, Forrestal Building, Room 1E–190, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20585, (202) 586–6020 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.