

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 205

[TM-98-00-1]

Information Meetings for the National Organic Program Proposed Rule

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meetings.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is announcing four public information meetings to discuss the proposed rule for the National Organic Program which was published in the **Federal Register** on December 16, 1997. The meetings are intended to provide an opportunity for USDA to present an overview of the proposed rule, respond to questions, and obtain public comments.

DATES: February 12, 1998, February 18, 1998, February 26, 1998, March 5, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The sessions will be held at the following locations:

February 12, 1998: The Meeting Place Conference Center, 2100 Northland Drive, Austin, Texas 78756, (512) 323-9500

February 18, 1998: Iowa State University, Iowa State Center, Scheman Building, Benton Auditorium, Suite 4, Ames, Iowa 50011, (515) 294-3218

February 26, 1998: Seattle Center, 305 Harrison Street, Seattle, Washington 98109, (206) 684-7202

March 5, 1998: Rutgers University, Rutgers Student Center, 126 College Avenue, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901, (732) 932-8821

Each of the meetings will be held during the hours of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in each of the respective locations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael Hankin, National Organic Program, Room 2945 South Building, USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Transportation and Marketing, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

Telephone (202) 720-3252. Fax (202) 690-3924.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On December 16, 1997, USDA published in the **Federal Register** (62 FR 65849) a proposed rule, issued under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, as amended (7 U.S.C. 6501 *et. seq.*), which addresses the methods, practices, and substances used in producing and handling organic crops and livestock and their processed products. Included in the proposed rule are provisions for: producing and handling organic agricultural products; labeling organic products; certification of organic operations; accreditation of State and private certifying agents; compliance testing; equivalency of foreign organic certification programs; approval of State organic programs; and fees. The proposed rule also includes an assessment of the economic impact of the rule, an analysis of its effects on small businesses, and an estimate of the paperwork burden required under the proposed rule. The purpose of the public meetings is to provide an opportunity for the public to ask USDA questions about the proposed rule and to submit public comments that will be included in the public record, together with comments submitted by letter, fax, or through the Internet, as provided for in the December 16, 1997, proposed rule.

Who Can Comment

Any member of the public may submit a comment; however, we request that those persons who wish to comment register with USDA as soon as possible prior to the meeting date. A person may register by calling Karen Thomas at (202) 720-3252, at which time each person will be requested to submit their name, the topic of the comment, and the meeting location where the comment will be submitted. Registration will help ensure that a person will be able to present his or her comment during the meeting. Persons wishing to comment may also register by sending an e-mail message to the NOP Webmaster at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>. Any person wishing to comment, but who is unable to register prior to the meetings, will be able to sign up at each meeting location on the day of the meeting between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. These presenters may submit comments on a first-come,

first-served basis and these comments will be limited based on the time available and the number of presenters.

Meeting Agenda

Each meeting will begin with a brief opening statement followed by a 30-minute question and answer period. The remainder of the meeting will be a listening session at which time interested parties may submit public comment on the proposed rule. Oral comments will be limited to 5 minutes to enable the greatest number of presenters an opportunity to speak. The question and answer period and the public comments will be recorded and included in the public record of comments for the proposed rule. We request that a printed copy of each person's comments be provided to USDA at the time the comment is submitted orally to ensure an accurate transcription.

Written Comments

As described in the **Federal Register** on December 16, 1997 (62 FR 65849), written comments may be mailed to Eileen S. Stommes, Deputy Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA, Room 4007-S, Ag Stop 0275, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, or faxed to (202) 690-4632 by March 16, 1998, or submitted via the Internet through the National Organic Program's homepage at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>.

Dated: January 28, 1998.

Eileen S. Stommes,

Deputy Administrator, Transportation and Marketing.

[FR Doc. 98-2552 Filed 1-29-98; 9:56 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

7 CFR Part 723

RIN 0560-AF20

National Marketing Quotas for Fire-Cured (Type 21), Fire-Cured (Types 22-23), Maryland (Type 32), Dark Air-Cured (Types 35-36), Virginia Sun-Cured (Type 37), Cigar Filler (Type 41), Cigar-Filler and Binder (Types 42-44 and 53-55), and Cigar-Binder (Types 51-52) Tobaccos

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.