

Secretary. The duties and responsibilities of the Board are specified in the Order.

The Act and the Order provide that the Secretary shall either certify or otherwise determine the eligibility of State or importer organizations or associations to nominate members to the Board to ensure that nominees represent the interests of cattle producers and importers. Nominations for importer representatives may also be made by individuals who import cattle, beef, or beef products. Individual importers do not need to be certified as eligible to submit nominations. When individual importers submit nominations, they must establish to the satisfaction of the Secretary that they are in fact importers of cattle, beef, or beef products, pursuant to § 1260.143(b)(2) of the Order (7 CFR 1260.143(b)(2)). Individual importers are encouraged to contact AMS at the above address to obtain further information concerning the nomination process including the beginning and ending dates of the established nomination period and required nomination forms and background information sheets. Certification and nomination procedures were promulgated in the final rule, published in the April 4, 1986, **Federal Register** (51 FR 11557) and currently appear at 7 CFR § 1260.500 through § 1260.640. Organizations which have previously been certified to nominate members to the Board do not need to reapply for certification to nominate producers and importers for the existing vacancies.

The Act and the Order provide that the members of the Board shall serve for terms of 3 years. The Order also requires USDA to announce when a Board vacancy does or will exist. The following States have one or more members whose terms will expire in early 1999:

State or unit	Number of vacancies
North Dakota	1
Ohio	1
Oklahoma	2
Pennsylvania	1
South Dakota	1
Tennessee	1
Texas	5
Virginia	1
Wisconsin	1
Northwest Unit	1
Western Unit (Oregon-Nevada Region)	1
Importer Unit	1

Since there are no anticipated vacancies on the Board for the remaining States' positions, or for the positions of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic units, nominations will not be solicited from certified organizations or associations in those States or units.

Uncertified eligible producer organizations in all States that are interested in being certified as eligible to nominate cattle producers for appointment to the listed producer positions, must complete and submit an official "Application for Certification of Organization or Association," which must be received by March 20, 1998. Uncertified eligible importer organizations that are interested in being certified as eligible to nominate importers for appointment to the listed importer positions must apply by the same date. Importers should not use the application form but should provide the requested information by letter as provided for in 7 CFR § 1260.540(b). Applications from States or units without vacant positions on the Board and other applications not received within the 30-day period after publication of this notice in the **Federal Register** will be considered for eligibility to nominate producers or importers for subsequent vacancies on the Board.

Only those organizations or associations which meet the criteria for certification of eligibility promulgated at 7 CFR § 1260.530 are eligible for certification. Those criteria are:

- (a) For State organizations or associations:
 - (1) Total paid membership must be comprised of at least a majority of cattle producers or represent at least a majority of cattle producers in a State or unit.
 - (2) Membership must represent a substantial number of producers who produce a substantial number of cattle in such State or unit.
 - (3) There must be a history of stability and permanency.

(4) There must be a primary or overriding purpose of promoting the economic welfare of cattle producers.

(b) For organizations or associations representing importers, the determination by the Secretary as to the eligibility of importer organizations or associations to nominate members to the Board shall be based on applications containing the following information:

- (1) The number and type of members represented (i.e., beef or cattle importers, etc.).
- (2) Annual import volume in pounds of beef and beef products and/or the number of head of cattle.
- (3) The stability and permanency of the importer organization or association.
- (4) The number of years in existence.
- (5) The names of the countries of origin for cattle, beef, or beef products imported.

All certified organizations and associations, including those which were previously certified in the States or units having vacant positions on the Board, will be notified simultaneously in writing of the beginning and ending dates of the established nomination period and will be provided with required nomination forms and background information sheets.

The names of qualified nominees received by the established due date will be submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture for consideration as appointees to the Board.

The information collection requirements referenced in this notice have been previously approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the provisions of 44 U.S.C., Chapter 35 and have been assigned OMB No. 0581-0093, except Board member nominee information sheets are assigned OMB No. 0505-0001.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 2901 *et seq.*

Dated: January 29, 1998.

Barry L. Carpenter,

Deputy Administrator, Livestock and Seed Program.

[FR Doc. 98-2857 Filed 2-4-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket No. TB-98-05]

Flue-Cured Tobacco Advisory Committee; Meeting

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

State or unit	Number of vacancies
Alabama	1
Arkansas	1
California	2
Colorado	1
Florida	1
Georgia	1
Idaho	1
Illinois	1
Indiana	1
Iowa	2
Kansas	2
Kentucky	1
Minnesota	1
Missouri	2
Montana	1
Nebraska	2
New York	1

Name: Flue-Cured Tobacco Advisory Committee.

Date: February 26, 1998.

Time: 10 a.m.

Place: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Tobacco Programs, Flue-Cured Tobacco Cooperative Stabilization Corporation Building, Room 223, 1306 Annapolis Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina 27608.

Purpose: The purpose of the meeting is to review and consider alternative packaging methods for flue-cured tobacco and other related matters for the 1998 flue-cured tobacco marketing season.

The meeting is open to the public. Persons, other than members, who wish to address the Committee at the meeting should contact John P. Duncan III, Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs, AMS, USDA, Room 502 Annex Building, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, (202) 205-0567, prior to the meeting. Written statements may be submitted to the Committee before, at, or after the meeting.

Dated: January 30, 1998.

John P. Duncan III,

Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 97-073N]

Nominations for Membership on the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Extension of Time Period to Solicit Nominations.

SUMMARY: In the **Federal Register** notice dated January 9, 1998, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it was soliciting nominations for membership on the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF). Nominees are sought who have scientific expertise in the fields of Microbiology, Epidemiology, Food Technology, Food Production, Risk Assessment, and Animal and Public health. Persons from the government, industry, academia, and consumer advocacy groups are invited to submit nominations. The notice asked that nominations be sent to the Office of the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service no later than 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. We would like to extend the date through February 28, 1998.

DATES: The nominee's typed resume or curriculum vitae should be sent to the

Office of the Administrator, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), 6913 Franklin Court, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700, on or before February 28, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Richard Ellis at the above address or by telephone at (202) 501-7625.

Done at Washington, DC, on January 28, 1998.

Thomas J. Billy,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98-2762 Filed 2-4-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 97-081N]

Equivalence Criteria for Imported Meat and Poultry Products

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is making available for public comment a Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) discussion paper, which was prepared by New Zealand with participation from the United States, Australia and Canada, relating to determinations of equivalence of sanitary measures associated with different food inspection and certification systems. **DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before March 9, 1998. **ADDRESSES:** Copies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) discussion paper relating to judgments of equivalence of sanitary measures associated with different food inspection and certification systems are available from the FSIS Docket Clerk in the FSIS Docket Room, Room 102, Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Submit one original and two copies of written comments on the paper to: FSIS Docket Clerk, Docket #97-081N, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 102, Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700. Facsimile comments may be sent to the Docket Clerk at (202) 690-0486. All comments received in response to this notice will be available for public comment in the Docket Clerk's Office between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Mark Manis, Director, International Policy Division, Office of Policy, Program Development and Evaluation; (202) 720-6400, or by electronic mail to mark.manis@usda.gov.

Background

FSIS is making available for public comment a Codex discussion paper, which was prepared by New Zealand with participation in drafting meetings by the United States, Australia and Canada. The paper was prepared for the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). It discusses and describes: (1) The basis for the determination of equivalence of sanitary measures associated with different food inspection and certification systems; (2) protection from foodborne hazards by application of particular sanitary measures, and the "appropriate level of protection" that is achieved by reference to "food safety objectives"; (3) application of a risk-based approach in the comparison of food safety objectives; (4) principles to be utilized in the determination of equivalence; (5) a step-wise process for facilitating judgment of equivalence; and (6) the need for CCFICS to develop principles and guidelines for the judgment of equivalence of sanitary measures.

FSIS requests comments on whether the paper, which is scheduled for presentation at the next CCFICS meeting in late February 1998, provides a framework that should be accepted, in general, by the United States for international determinations of equivalence between meat and poultry inspection systems. Written comments received in response to this notice will help prepare U.S. Delegates for the upcoming CCFICS discussions on equivalence and will further the development of FSIS equivalence policies for imported meat and poultry products. FSIS intends to publish equivalence policies for public review and comment in the spring of 1998. The Agency will subsequently hold a public meeting to obtain additional comments on equivalence determinations.

Done at Washington, DC on January 28, 1998.

Thomas J. Billy,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98-2763 Filed 2-4-98; 8:45 am]

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