

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

[FV-97-328N]

United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) is revising the United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes. Specifically, AMS is lowering the recommended minimum drained weight averages of canned sweetpotatoes packed in retail size cans by two percent.

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 31, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen L. Kaufman, Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 0247, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 720-5021; fax (202) 690-1087; or e-mail Karen_L_Kaufman@usda.gov.

The current United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes, along with the changes, are available through the above addresses or by accessing the Internet at the following site: www.ams.usda.gov/standards/vegcan.htm.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 203(c) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended, directs and authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture "to develop and improve standards of quality, condition, grade, and packaging and recommend and demonstrate such standards in order to encourage uniformity and consistency in commercial practices . . ." The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is committed to carrying out this authority in a manner that facilitates the

marketing of agricultural commodities. The United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes do not appear in the Code of Federal Regulations but are maintained by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Copies of official standards are available upon request.

AMS proposed to change the United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes using the procedures it published in the August 13, 1997, **Federal Register** and that appear in Part 36 of Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR Part 36). Specifically, AMS proposed to lower the recommended drained weight for sweetpotatoes packed in retail size cans, including No. 10 size cans, by two percent. The drained weight criteria for the No. 300 can, a size pack which has been increasingly utilized in the industry, will also be added. These changes would allow a more equitable marketing environment for domestic sweetpotato processors.

AMS received petitions from the Sweet Potato Council of the United States, and the North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission and three processors requesting the revision of the United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes.

Changes in the varietal types of sweetpotatoes and the growing conditions in the growing regions have changed significantly since the current Recommended Minimum Drained Weight Averages (RMDWA's) were first proposed 21 years ago. The petitioners contended that a unilateral reduction in drained weight requirements in the grade standard was indicated due to the varietal characteristics of sweetpotatoes currently available for processing. Data supporting their petition was reviewed by AMS.

AMS published a Notice in the January 15, 1998, **Federal Register** (63 FR 2357). AMS received nine comments, all in favor of the proposed changes to the standard. Three of these comments requested additional changes to be made to the standard that are unrelated to the proposed change. These will be addressed at a later date after receiving more information from the requestors.

Accordingly, based on all the information we have reviewed, AMS is lowering the recommended minimum drained weight for sweetpotatoes packed in retail size cans, including No.

10 size cans, by two percent, and has added the recommended drained weight criteria for the No. 300 can in the grade standards. The No. 300 size can is being added because of the increased usage of this can size. As the canning industry has been replacing production of the No. 303 container size with the No. 300 can, it is appropriate to include the RMDWA for No. 300 cans along with the other drained weight changes in the standard.

This change will become effective 30 days after date of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.

Dated: July 23, 1998.

Robert C. Keeney,

Deputy Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs.

[FR Doc. 98-20322 Filed 7-29-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Lolo National Forest Big Game Winter Range Restoration Project

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service has identified 21 big game winter ranges on the Lolo National Forest that are in a downward trend due to the invasion of noxious weeds and encroaching conifers. The Forest Service will evaluate these winter ranges and analyze various management activities to reduce the spread and density of noxious weeds and allow native and desirable vegetation to reestablish itself and regain vigor. The purpose and need for this project is for the Forest Service to restore the condition of certain high value winter ranges across the Lolo National Forest over the next five to ten years. The proposed actions being considered to achieve the purpose and need include a combination of: burning, cutting small trees and leaving them on site, biological weed management, other physical weed controls, and applying herbicides by ground equipment and helicopter. Due to the steep topography on the majority of these sites, we are considering the aerial application of herbicides using a helicopter. The total