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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

7 CFR Part 652

Technical Service Provider Assistance: Correction

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Interim final rule; correction.

SUMMARY: The Natural Resources Conservation Service published in the **Federal Register** of March 24, 2003, a document concerning payment rates for technical service providers, and clarification of the Department's use of technical service providers. The dates paragraph was incorrect. This document corrects that paragraph.

DATES: This correction is effective on March 31, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Melissa Hammond, Technical Service Provider Coordinator, Strategic Natural Resource Issues Staff, NRCS, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, DC 20013–2890; telephone (202) 720–6731; fax: (202) 720–3052; submit e-mail to: *gary.gross@usda.gov,* Attention: Technical Service Provider Assistance.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Natural Resources Conservation Service published a document in the **Federal Register** of March 24, 2003, (68 FR 14131) amending an interim rule published on November 21, 2002 (67 FR 70119). We intended to reopen the comment period on the November interim rule, but inadvertently omitted that reopening information. This corrects the error. On page 14131, in the second column, the dates paragraph is corrected to read as follows:

DATES: Effective date: March 31, 2003. Comments on this amendment must be received by June 30, 2003. In addition, the comment period for the Technical Service Provider Assistance Interim Final Rule published on November 21, 2002 (67 FR 70119) is hereby reopened. Comments must be received by April 30, 2003.

Dated: March 26, 2003.

Helen V. Huntington,

NRCS Federal Register Liaison.

[FR Doc. 03–7694 Filed 3–26–03; 3:46 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 959

[Docket No. FV03–959–1 FR]

Onions Grown in South Texas; Increased Assessment Rate

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This rule increases the assessment rate established for the South Texas Onion Committee (Committee) for the 2002–03 and subsequent fiscal periods from $0.05 to $0.085 per 50-pound equivalent of onions handled. The Committee locally administers the marketing order which regulates the handling of onions grown in South Texas. Authorization to assess onion handlers enables the Committee to incur expenses that are reasonable and necessary to administer the program. The fiscal period began August 1 and ends July 31. The assessment rate will remain in effect indefinitely unless modified, suspended, or terminated.

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Belinda G. Garza, Regional Manager, McAllen Marketing Field Office, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1313 E. Hackberry, McAllen, Texas 78501; telephone: (956) 682–2833, Fax: (956) 682–5942; or George Kelhart, Technical Advisor, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., STOP 0237, Washington, DC 20250–0237; telephone: (202) 720–2491, Fax: (202) 720–8938.

Small businesses may request information on complying with this regulation by contacting Jay Guerber, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., STOP 0237, Washington, DC 20250–0237; telephone: (202) 720–2491, Fax: (202) 720–8938, or E-mail: *Jay.Guerber@usda.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule is issued under Marketing Agreement No. 143 and Order No. 959, both as amended (7 CFR part 959), regulating the handling of onions grown in South Texas, hereinafter referred to as the ''order.'' The order is effective under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601–674), hereinafter referred to as the ''Act.''

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) is issuing this rule in conformance with Executive Order 12866.

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. Under the marketing order now in effect, South Texas onion handlers are subject to assessments. Funds to administer the order are derived from such assessments. It is intended that the assessment rate as issued herein will be applicable to all assessable onions beginning on August 1, 2002, and continue until amended, suspended, or terminated. This rule will not preempt any State or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule.

The Act 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 USDA a petition stating that 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. Such handler is afforded the opportunity for a hearing on the petition. After the hearing USDA 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 to review USDA's ruling on the petition, provided an action is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

This rule increases the assessment rate established for the Committee for the 2002–03 and subsequent fiscal