Notices

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. No. AMS–SC–25–0057]

United States Standards for Grades of Orange Juice

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final notice.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is revising the U.S. Standards for Grades of Orange Juice (U.S. OJ Standards or Standards) by revising the limits for Grade B Brix allowances in Pasteurized Orange Juice (POJ) under the U.S. OJ Standards to reference the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Standard of Identity (SOI) for POJ.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dana N. White, USDA, Specialty Crops Inspection Division, 100 Riverside Parkway, Suite 101, Fredericksburg, VA 22406; by phone (202) 720–5021; fax (540) 361–1199; or email *Dana.White@usda.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 203(c) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621–1627), as amended, directs, and authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture ''[t]o develop and improve standards of quality, condition, quantity, grade, and packaging, and recommend and demonstrate such standards in order to encourage uniformity and consistency in commercial practices.''

AMS is committed to carrying out this authority in a manner that facilitates the marketing of agricultural commodities and distributes copies of official standards available upon request. The U.S. Standards for Grades of Fruits and Vegetables that no longer appear in the Code of Federal Regulations are maintained by AMS at: *http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards.* AMS is revising the U.S. OJ Standards using the procedures provided for in part 36 of title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR part 36).

Background

On November 18, 2025, AMS published in the **Federal Register** (90 FR 51637; Docket No. AMS–SC–25–0057) an interim final notice and request for comment on revisions to the U.S. OJ Standards.

Through this action, AMS is revising the U.S. OJ Standards at section 52.1557 Requirements for Grades, Table VII—Pasteurized Orange Juice. Specifically, this final notice removes the existing Brix minimums for Grade B unsweetened and sweetened POJ and inserts a reference to the FDA's SOI regulations for POJ at 21 CFR 146.140(a). Historically, to maintain consistency in the domestic orange juice industry, AMS has based its Brix allowances for POJ under the U.S. OJ Standards on the FDA's SOI for POJ. Accordingly, USDA's current minimum requirements for Grade B Brix allowances in POJ under the U.S. OJ Standards are based on the FDA's current SOI requirements. Therefore, for industry consistency, any changes to the FDA's SOI Brix minimum requirements would result in corresponding changes to the U.S. OJ Standards. Additionally, some state regulations, including Florida—the second largest orange juice producer in the United States—require that Florida orange juice meet the U.S. OJ Standards. Generally, the domestic orange juice industry relies on the U.S. OJ Standards for contract requirements related to acceptable POJ standards.

On August 16, 2023, in response to a petition from the Florida Citrus Processors Association and Florida Citrus Mutual, the FDA issued a request for information (RFI) seeking comment on potentially amending the SOI for POJ by reducing the minimum soluble solids content (*i.e.,* sugar content) from 10.5° to 10° Brix (88 FR 55607). The Florida industry requested this change as they struggle to meet the current requirement due to the devastating effects of citrus greening disease (infected trees produce a lower Brix level). On August 6, 2025, FDA published a proposed rule that would amend its SOI for POJ by lowering the minimum orange juice soluble solids content from 10.5° to 10° Brix (90 FR 37817). Should FDA finalize its proposed amendment to its SOI for POJ, USDA would need to amend its U.S. OJ Standards accordingly. However, if the USDA changes are not made concurrently with the FDA's changes, Florida producers would be bound by a higher Brix level under the U.S. OJ Standards and not realize the relief granted by FDA's reduced Brix minimums. This inconsistency would likely cause significant disruption to producers, undue economic hardship, and negative impacts on commerce.

Accordingly, this revision to the U.S. OJ Standards will remove the specific Brix allowances for Grade B POJ and instead incorporate the FDA's SOI for POJ regulation to ensure USDA and FDA Brix allowances for POJ remain consistent. This alignment of the U.S. OJ Standards with the FDA's SOI will prevent any future discrepancy between the agencies' respective Brix minimums for POJ.

Comments

A 60-day period was provided for interested parties to submit comments on the interim final notice revising the U.S. OJ Standards. In response to its request, AMS received one comment from the Juice Products Association (JPA), three anonymous comments, and one comment that was not responsive to the action in the interim final notice. All comments were posted on *http://www.regulations.gov.*

The JPA offered its support for the revision to the U.S. OJ Standards stating, ''JPA supports the interim final notice, which would revise the limits for Grade B Brix allowances in Pasteurized Orange Juice (POJ) under the U.S. OJ Standards to reference the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Standard of Identity (SOI).''

One anonymous commenter offered their support ''for the AMS to recommend that the USDA align with the FDA standards for Grade B pasteurized orange juice.'' Another anonymous commenter stated they are in ''support of the revising of the Grade B Brix allowances for pasteurized orange juice.''

The third anonymous commenter stated that they ''recommend that the agency finalize the proposed rule,'' but were also concerned with whether the revision to the Standards would ''reduce taste or nutritional quality for consumers.'' In the FDA's proposed rule, the agency noted that, as asserted by the petitioners and in the commenters to their RFI, ''lowering the minimum Brix from 10.5° to 10.0° is unlikely to affect the taste of POJ.'' The FDA explained that ''nutrition labels for POJ provided by the petitioners show that a serving (8 oz) of orange juice with a Brix of 10.5° has 18 grams of sugar, whereas a serving of orange juice with a Brix of 10.0° has 17 grams of sugar. Thus, lowering the minimum Brix of POJ [. . .] would result in one gram difference in sugar content per serving.'' Further, the FDA stated that, ''data submitted by the petitioners indicates that a change in Brix from 10.5° to 10.0° has a minimal impact on the nutrient levels in orange juice.'' (90 FR 37820)

AMS acknowledges the final commenter, but notes that their comment was not responsive to the action in the interim final notice.

AMS made no changes to the revision to the U.S. OJ Standards as provided for in the interim final notice based on these comments.

AMS will publish the following changes to the U.S. OJ Standards at *https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards:*

- Section 52.1557 Requirements for Grades, Table VII—Pasteurized Orange Juice: AMS will remove the corresponding minimum Brix values for U.S. Grade B unsweetened and sweetened pasteurized orange juice (10.5 and 10.5) and insert a footnote designated as ''Footnote 4.'' Footnote 4 will read, ''See values set forth in 21 CFR 146.140(a).''

Erin Morris,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 2026–12846 Filed 6–24–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Agriculture has submitted the following information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104–13. Comments are required regarding; whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments regarding this information collection received by July 27, 2026 will be considered. Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website *www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain.* Find this particular information collection by selecting ''Currently under 30-day Review—Open for Public Comments'' or by using the search function.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number and the agency informs potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information that such persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Farm Service Agency

Title: Emergency Relief Program 2022 (ERP 2022).

OMB Control Number: 0560–0316.

Summary of Collection: Title I of the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (Division N of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023; Pub. L. 117–328) provides $3.741715 billion for necessary expenses related losses of revenue, quality, or production of crops (including milk, on-farm stored commodities, crops prevented from planting in 2020 and 2021, and harvested adulterated wine grapes), trees, bushes, and vines, as a consequence of droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze, including a polar vortex, smoke exposure, quality losses of crops, and excessive moisture occurring in calendar year 2022. FSA is directed by USDA to use part of this funding to public assistance to eligible crop producers through ERP 2022.

The Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Pub. L. 119–4), provides that producers may retain ERP 2022 payments, not to exceed 90 percent of the producer's revenue losses (as determined by the Secretary), if the Secretary determines a *de minimis* amount of a producer's revenue loss is attributable to crops for which the producer did not have crop insurance or NAP coverage. Producers who are affected by this provision will receive a notification letter from FSA and complete FSA–524C to certify their eligibility to retain their payment under the *de minimis* provisions.

Need and Use of the Information: The information submitted by respondents is used by FSA to determine eligibility and issue payments to eligible applicants under ERP 2022.

Producers who are determined to be compliant based on FSA or RMA data will be notified of the determination by mail, and no other action will be required. If FSA is not able determine a producer's compliance based on available data, FSA will notify the producer by mail that they must submit supporting documentation to verify their compliance in order to retain their ERP 2022 payment. These producers will also be notified of FSA's final determination of compliance or noncompliance.

FSA is revising the estimated respondents and burden hours for this collection to reflect the number of ERP 2022 participants and responses associated with these activities. FSA is also removing the forms previously included under this collection and the corresponding respondent and burden hour estimates because the time period to submit the forms has ended. All participants who received an ERP 2022 payment have already filed the required forms.

Producers may also need to submit additional forms if not already on file with FSA, including forms to establish their eligibility for a higher payment limitation or payment rate, if applicable.

Description of Respondents: Farms.

Number of Respondents: 218,640.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting; Other (one-time).

Total Burden Hours: 22,255.

Rachelle Ragland-Greene,

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

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