

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

[Docket # FV-04-334]

United States Standards for Grades of Olive Oil

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), prior to undertaking research and other work associated with revising an official grade standard, is soliciting comments on the petition to change the United States Standards for Grades of Olive Oil. AMS received a petition from olive oil producers asking USDA to consider revising the current U.S. grade standard to conform to current industry standards commonly accepted in the United States and abroad.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before December 8, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this notice. Comments must be sent to Chere L. Shorter, Standardization Section, Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Room 0709, South Building; STOP 0247, Washington, DC 20250; telephone (202) 720-4693; fax (202) 690-1527, e-mail Chere.Shorter@usda.gov. The United States Standards for Grades of Olive Oil is available either through the address cited above or by accessing the AMS Web site on the Internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/ppb.html>. Any comments received regarding the notice will be posted at that site. Comments also will be available for public inspection in the above office during regular business hours.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chere L. Shorter, telephone (202) 720-4693.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

AMS received a petition from California Olive Oil Council, an association of olive oil producers, requesting the revision of the United States Standards for Grades of Olive Oil. These standards are issued under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621 etc.).

The petitioners are requesting the USDA to revise the terminology employed in connection with grades of olive oil. The current standard, effective since March 22, 1948, uses grades of "fancy," "choice," and "substandard." These terms are not consistent with today's terminology for the olive oil industry. The petitioners are requesting that the new proposed standard, which would be first published as a proposal with a request for public comment, employ the terms used commercially in the marketplace.

These terms are divided into two major groups: "olive oil," and "olive-pomace oil." "Olive oil," is defined as oil obtained exclusively from the fruit of the olive tree, produced without solvents or re-esterification processes. The broad term olive oil includes "virgin olive oil," "refined olive oil," and "blended olive oil." Virgin olive oil is further delineated into two more categories: "virgin oils fit for consumption as they are" and "virgin olive oil not fit for human consumption." "Virgin oils fit for consumption as they are," include "extra virgin olive oil," "virgin olive oil," and "ordinary olive oil." "Virgin olive oil not fit for human consumption," is caused by "rancidity," and is intended to be refined or used for other technical purposes.

The second major group of olive oil is Olive pomace oil and includes "crude olive-pomace oil," "refined olive-pomace oil," and "olive pomace oil." Olive pomace oil is obtained by treating olive pomace with solvents or other physical treatments, excluding oils of other kinds or oils obtained by re-esterification.

The petitioners have detailed identity characteristics comprising purity criteria applicable to olive oils and

olive-pomace oil based on internationally accepted standards.

Domestic olive oil production occurs primarily in California (approximately 99%), with lesser amounts produced in Texas and Arizona. U.S. olive oil production in 1998 was 325,000 gallons (approx. 2,400,000 pounds). The U.S. share of world production is 0.1 percent. In 2003, the U.S. domestic consumption of olive oil was 454 million pounds. The U.S. imports more than 360 million pounds a year¹. According to the petitioner, there are more than 400 producers and growers of olive oil domestically.

The petitioners believe that changing the standard would enhance the ability of U.S. olive oil producers to compete domestically and internationally. A copy of the petitioners' request is located on the AMS Web site at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/ppb.html> along with the current U.S. Standards for Grades of Olive Oil.

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Prior to undertaking detailed work to develop a proposed revised standard, AMS is soliciting comments on the petition requesting the revision of the U.S. Standards for Grades of Olive Oil. In particular, AMS would welcome comments and information regarding the likely utility of revised terminology to include types of olive oil, namely "Extra-Virgin Olive Oil," "Virgin Olive Oil," "Refined Olive Oil," "Olive Oil," and "Olive-Pomace Oil" and the probable impact on processors, and growers. AMS is requesting comments on the petitioners proposed standard regarding the quality, purity, and identity characteristics, *i.e.*, color, defects, flavor, methods of analysis, fatty acid composition, or any other pertinent criteria. Further details of the proposed standard are provided in the petition and are available from Chere L. Shorter at the previously mentioned address in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section or can be found on the AMS Web site at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/ppb.html> under the "Federal Register Notices" link.

This notice provides for a 30-day comment period for interested parties to comment on the petition to develop a proposed revision of the standard.

¹ Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Bureau. Office of Trade and Analysis (OTEA), International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Should AMS conclude that there is a need for changes to the standard, detailed work would be undertaken and the eventual proposed standard would be published in the **Federal Register** with a request for comments in accordance with 7 CFR part 36.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621–1627.

Dated: November 2, 2004.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 04–24826 Filed 11–5–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 04–119–1]

National Animal Identification System; Public Meeting

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Veterinary Services program of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, will host a meeting to provide stakeholders in the Department's National Animal Identification System (NAIS), particularly manufacturers and distributors of animal identification devices and technologies, with an opportunity to offer comments on the administration of animal identification numbers under the NAIS. Specifically, the session will focus on the anticipated roles and requirements for individuals, organizations, and companies that wish to become authorized animal identification number managers or distributors of approved animal identification devices.

DATES: The public meeting will be held Friday, November 19, 2004, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will be held at the Kansas City Airport Marriott, 775 Brasilia Avenue, Kansas City, MO.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Neil Hammerschmidt, Animal Identification Officer, National Center for Animal Health Programs, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 43, Riverdale, MD 20737–1231, (301) 734–5571.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On December 30, 2003, the Secretary of Agriculture announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

would expedite the implementation of a National Animal Identification System (NAIS) for all animal species after the discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in a cow in Washington State. On April 27, 2004, following several months of development, the Secretary announced the framework for implementation of a NAIS designed to provide a unique identification number for agricultural premises and animals so that diseases can be more quickly contained and eradicated. The Secretary also announced that \$18.8 million would be transferred from the Department's Commodity Credit Corporation to provide initial funding for the program during fiscal year (FY) 2004. The FY 2004 funding has been earmarked for the initial infrastructure development and implementation of the national system, but both private and public support will be required to make it fully operational. The Administration's proposed FY 2005 budget includes another \$33 million for the effort.

The NAIS will be implemented in several phases over time. Currently, the registration of premises, *i.e.*, the locations where livestock are raised or held, is the primary activity of the NAIS. The second phase will involve the identification of animals. Certain species, such as cattle, will require individual identification, which will be accomplished by attaching to the animal an approved identification tag or device bearing an animal identification number (AIN). The AIN may be cross-referenced or linked to other technologies (*e.g.*, radio frequency identification, retinal image, DNA, etc.) to automate the collection of the animal's number or to verify the animal's identification. Other species, such as swine and poultry, typically move through the production chain in groups or lots. These animals may be eligible for identification as a group.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the NAIS, we are publishing an interim rule in the Rules and Regulations section of this issue of the **Federal Register** (APHIS Docket No. 04–052–1, "Livestock Identification; Use of Alternative Numbering Systems") that, among other things, amended the regulations to recognize additional numbering systems for the identification of animals in interstate commerce and State/Federal/industry cooperative disease control and eradication programs and to redefine the numbering system to identify premises where animals are managed or held. The interim rule recognizes numbering systems for individual animals, as well

as groups or lots of animals within the same production system. Use of the new numbering systems will not, however, be required as a result of the interim rule.

Various non-producer participants will be involved in administering the NAIS. One group of non-producer participants is the AIN managers, who will manufacture or provide distributors with approved identification devices or technologies containing the AIN. Another group is the AIN distributors, who will provide AIN tags or devices to premises that hold or manage livestock.

The design and development of an AIN management system will be initiated in the near future. This system will require a method to approve entities to become authorized AIN managers and distributors and to evaluate performance. In addition, the system will need a method for the allocation and distribution of AINs and the approval of official animal identification devices.

For implementation to be successful, it is imperative that we share our plans for the AIN management system with potential AIN managers and distributors and provide a forum for them to present their views. Therefore, we plan to conduct a public meeting on Friday, November 19, 2004, at the Kansas City Airport Marriott, Kansas City, MO, for industry stakeholders, in particular those that manufacture and/or distribute animal identification devices. The focus of the session will be on the anticipated roles and responsibilities of AIN managers and distributors under the NAIS.

The meeting will be open to the public and is intended to provide a forum for the exchange of information regarding the administration of AINs under the NAIS. The meeting is not intended to serve as an opportunity for the submission of comments regarding the interim rule published in this issue of the **Federal Register** (APHIS Docket No. 04–052–1, "Livestock Identification; Use of Alternative Numbering Systems"). Persons wishing to submit comments on that interim rule should refer to the commenting instructions contained in that document.

Done in Washington, DC, this 2nd day of November 2004.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. E4–3052 Filed 11–5–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P