

§ 1218.51 Financial statements.

(a) As requested by the Secretary, the USABC shall prepare and submit financial statements to the Secretary on a periodic basis. Each such financial statement shall include, but not be limited to, a balance sheet, income statement, and expense budget. The expense budget shall show expenditures during the time period covered by the report, year-to-date expenditures, and the unexpended budget.

(b) Each financial statement shall be submitted to the Secretary within 30 days after the end of the time period to which it applies.

(c) The USABC shall submit annually to the Secretary an annual financial statement within 90 days after the end of the fiscal year to which it applies.

§ 1218.52 Assessments.

(a) The funds to cover the Council's expenses shall be paid from assessments on producers and importers, donations from any person not subject to assessments under this Order, and other funds available to the Board including those collected pursuant to § 1218.56 and subject to the limitations contained therein.

(b) The collection of assessments on domestic blueberries will be the responsibility of the first handler receiving the blueberries. In the case of the producer acting as its own first handler, the producer will be required to collect and remit its individual assessments.

(c) Such assessments shall be levied at a rate of \$12 per ton on all blueberries. The assessment rate will be reviewed, and may be modified with the approval of the Secretary, after the first referendum is conducted as stated in § 1218.71(b).

(d) Each importer of fresh and processed blueberries shall pay an assessment to the USABC on blueberries imported for marketing in the United States, through the U.S. Customs Service.

(1) The assessment rate for imported fresh and processed blueberries shall be the same or equivalent to the rate for fresh blueberries produced in the United States.

(2) The import assessment shall be uniformly applied to imported fresh

and frozen blueberries that are identified by the numbers 0810.40.0028 and 0811.90.2028, respectively, in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States or any other numbers used to identify fresh and frozen blueberries. Assessments on other types of imported processed blueberries, such as dried blueberries, puree, and juice, may be added at the recommendation of the USABC with the approval of the Secretary.

(3) The assessments due on imported fresh and processed blueberries shall be paid when they enter or are withdrawn for consumption in the United States.

(e) All assessment payments and reports will be submitted to the office of the USABC. All final payments for a crop year are to be received no later than November 30 of that year. A late payment charge shall be imposed on any handler who fails to remit to the USABC, the total amount for which any such handler is liable on or before the due date established by the USABC. In addition to the late payment charge, an interest charge shall be imposed on the outstanding amount for which the handler is liable. The rate of interest shall be prescribed in regulations issued by the Secretary.

(f) Persons failing to remit total assessments due in a timely manner may also be subject to actions under federal debt collection procedures.

(g) The USABC may authorize other organizations to collect assessments on its behalf with the approval of the Secretary.

§ 1218.53 Exemption procedures.

(a) Any producer who produces less than 2,000 pounds of blueberries annually who desires to claim an exemption from assessments during a fiscal year as provided in § 1218.42 shall apply to the USABC, on a form provided by the USABC, for a certificate of exemption. Such producer shall certify that the producer's production of blueberries shall be less than 2,000 pounds for the fiscal year for which the exemption is claimed. Any importer who imports less than 2,000 pounds of fresh and processed blueberries annually who desires to claim an exemption from assessments during a fiscal year as provided in § 1218.52 shall apply to the USABC,

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on a form provided by the USABC, for a certificate of exemption. Such importer shall certify that the importer's importation of fresh and processed blueberries shall not exceed 2,000 pounds, for the fiscal year for which the exemption is claimed.

(b) On receipt of an application, the USABC shall determine whether an exemption may be granted. The USABC then will issue, if deemed appropriate, a certificate of exemption to each person who is eligible to receive one. Each producer who is exempt from assessment must provide an exemption number to the first handler in order to be exempt from the collection of an assessment on blueberries. First handlers and importers, except as otherwise authorized by the USABC, shall maintain records showing the exemptee's name and address along with the exemption number assigned by the USABC.

(c) Importers who are exempt from assessment shall be eligible for reimbursement of assessments collected by the U.S. Customs Service and shall apply to the USABC for reimbursement of such assessments paid. No interest will be paid on assessments collected by the U.S. Customs Service. Requests for reimbursement shall be submitted to the USABC within 90 days of the last day of the year the blueberries were actually imported.

(d) Any person who desires an exemption from assessments for a subsequent fiscal year shall reapply to the USABC, on a form provided by the USABC, for a certificate of exemption.

(e) The USABC may require persons receiving an exemption from assessments to provide to the USABC reports on the disposition of exempt blueberries and, in the case of importers, proof of payment of assessments.

§ 1218.54 Programs, plans, and projects.

(a) The USABC shall receive and evaluate, or on its own initiative develop, and submit to the Secretary for approval any program, plan, or project authorized under this subpart. Such programs, plans, or projects shall provide for:

(1) The establishment, issuance, effectuation, and administration of appropriate programs for promotion, re-

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search, and information, including producer and consumer information, with respect to fresh and processed blueberries; and

(2) The establishment and conduct of research with respect to the use, nutritional value, sale, distribution, and marketing of fresh and processed blueberries, and the creation of new products thereof, to the end that the marketing and use of blueberries may be encouraged, expanded, improved, or made more acceptable and to advance the image, desirability, or quality of fresh and processed blueberries.

(b) No program, plan, or project shall be implemented prior to its approval by the Secretary. Once a program, plan, or project is so approved, the USABC shall take appropriate steps to implement it.

(c) Each program, plan, or project implemented under this subpart shall be reviewed or evaluated periodically by the USABC to ensure that it contributes to an effective program of promotion, research, or information. If it is found by the USABC that any such program, plan, or project does not contribute to an effective program of promotion, research, or information, then the USABC shall terminate such program, plan, or project.

(d) No program, plan, or project including advertising shall be false or misleading or disparaging another agricultural commodity. Blueberries of all origins shall be treated equally.

§ 1218.55 Independent evaluation.

The USABC shall, not less often than every five years, authorize and fund, from funds otherwise available to the USABC, an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the Order and other programs conducted by the USABC pursuant to the Act. The USABC shall submit to the Secretary, and make available to the public, the results of each periodic independent evaluation conducted under this paragraph.

§ 1218.56 Patents, copyrights, trademarks, information, publications, and product formulations.

Patents, copyrights, trademarks, information, publications, and product formulations developed through the use of funds received by the USABC