

**§ 955.40**

(g) Prior to the beginning of each fiscal period, to prepare and submit to the Secretary a budget of its projected income and expenses for such fiscal period, together with a report thereon and a recommendation as to the rate of assessment for such period;

(h) To cause its books to be audited by a Certified Public Accountant at least once each fiscal period, and at such other time as the committee may deem necessary or as the Secretary may request. The report of such audit shall show the receipt and expenditure of funds collected pursuant to this part. A copy of each report shall be furnished to the Secretary. A copy shall also be made available at the principal office of the committee for inspection by producers and handlers provided that confidential information shall be removed;

(i) To give the Secretary the same notice of meetings of the committee and its subcommittees as is given to its members.

**EXPENSES AND ASSESSMENTS**

**§ 955.40 Expenses.**

The committee is authorized to incur such expenses as the Secretary may find are reasonable and likely to be incurred by the committee for its maintenance and functioning, and to enable it to exercise its powers and perform its duties in accordance with the provisions of this part. The funds to cover such expenses shall be acquired in the manner prescribed in §§ 955.42 and 955.45.

**§ 955.41 Budget.**

At least 60 days prior to each fiscal period, or such other date as may be specified by the Secretary, and as may be necessary thereafter, the committee shall prepare an estimated budget of income and expenditures necessary for the administration of this part. The committee may recommend a rate of assessment calculated to provide adequate funds to defray its proposed expenditures. The committee shall present such budget to the Secretary with an accompanying report showing the basis for its calculations.

**§ 955.42 Assessments.**

(a) The funds to cover the committee's expenses shall be acquired by the levying of assessments upon handlers as provided in this subpart. Each person who first handles Vidalia onions shall pay assessments to the committee upon demand, which assessments shall be in payment of such handler's pro rata share of the committee's expenses.

(b) Assessments shall be levied upon handlers at rates established by the Secretary. Such rates may be established upon the basis of the committee's recommendations or other available information.

(c) At any time during, or subsequent to, a given fiscal period the committee may recommend the approval of an amended budget and an increase in the rate of assessment. Upon the basis of such recommendations, or other available information, the Secretary may approve an amended budget and increase the assessment rate. Such increase shall be applicable to all Vidalia onions which were handled during such fiscal period.

(d) The payment of assessments for the maintenance and functioning of the committee may be required under this part throughout the period it is in effect irrespective of whether particular provisions of this part are suspended or become inoperative.

(e) To provide funds for the administration of the provisions of this part during the initial fiscal period or the first part of a fiscal period when neither sufficient operating reserve funds nor sufficient revenue from assessments on the current seasons's shipments are available, the committee may accept payment of assessments in advance or may borrow money for such purposes.

(f) The committee may impose a late payment charge or an interest charge or both, on any handler who fails to pay any assessment in a timely manner. Such time and the rates shall be recommended by the committee and approved by the Secretary.

**§ 955.43 Accounting.**

(a) All funds received by the committee pursuant to the provisions of