

## Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA

## § 46.31

### GROWERS' AGENTS AND SHIPPERS

#### § 46.30 Types of operations by growers' agents and shippers.

(a) The usual operations of shippers consist of purchasing produce from growers in their own names. They distribute the produce in commerce by selling, consigning, or jointing the shipments, assuming any loss or profits that result from these operations. In addition, shippers may handle produce on joint account with growers or others.

(b) Growers' agents sell and distribute produce for or on behalf of growers and others and, in addition, may perform a wide variety of services, such as financing, planting, harvesting, grading, packing, furnishing labor, seed, containers, and other supplies or services. They usually distribute the produce in their own names and collect payment direct from the consignees. They render accountings to their principals, paying the net proceeds after deducting their expenses and fees. Some agents are limited by contract to making only sales and cannot joint or consign produce without obtaining the prior consent of the growers. Other agents are granted blanket authority by the growers to market and distribute the produce, using their discretion as to the best methods, depending on market conditions and the quality of the produce available. They can sell, consign or ship on joint account, use the services of brokers or sell through terminal market auctions. They are authorized to grant credits, make adjustments in the invoice price, handle claims with the carriers, or even abandon shipments, when circumstances justify such action, without consulting the growers. Some agents have an agreement with the growers to pool the produce and render accountings on the basis of the average or prorated selling prices after deducting the prorated expenses incurred for the various operations performed and the agents' selling fees. Some agents' contracts require an accounting on the basis of actual selling prices after deducting the actual expenses incurred for services performed and the selling fees. Some agents' contracts specify a fixed charge for harvesting, grading, packing, fur-

nishing the container or other services, plus a selling fee, and thereby substantially reduce the record requirements necessary to prove the cost of the various operations.

#### § 46.31 Duties of shippers.

(a) *General.* The responsibilities of shippers vary with their contracts with growers to purchase produce or to handle produce on joint account. Similarly, their responsibilities to their customers depend upon their contracts to sell, consign or joint account produce with dealers on terminal markets. Shippers shall pay promptly for produce purchased and any deficits incurred on consigned shipments. They shall fully comply with their obligations in connection with joint account transactions. A shipper who fails to perform any express or implied duty is in violation of the Act and may be held liable for any damages resulting therefrom. The shipper shall prepare and maintain records which fully and correctly disclose the details of his transactions.

(b) *Receiving records.* Each shipper shall prepare and maintain a record of all produce handled including his own production. This record shall be in the form of a book (preferably a bound book), with numbered pages or comparable business records. This receiving record shall show for each lot the date received, whether purchased or received on joint account, the quantity, quality, and kind of produce, the purchase price or joint account cost, and the name and address of the supplier. Shippers shall issue receipts to growers and others for all produce received.

(c) *Disposition records.* When a shipper purchases produce from growers or others, his records shall also show the disposition of the produce, whether sold or consigned, date of shipment, car number, or if shipped by truck, the license number, name and address of the carrier, name and address of the buyer, commission merchant or auction, and other pertinent details of the transaction, such as the terms of sale, selling price, and date of payment.

(d) *Joint accounts with growers.* When a shipper enters into a joint account transaction with growers or others, the agreement between the parties should