

to ensure consistency and continuity in the Board's financial planning and operations, and to recognize the recent order amendment revising the marketing year, the assessment rate change and the 2008–09 marketing year will become effective September 1, 2008. Additional modification is made to correct the erroneous references to the total expenditures. Finally, the rule is further modified to change the Budget Expense Category tables to include the amount budgeted for production research contingencies and the statement at the asterisk to indicate the production research contingencies are part of the Production Research budget. Although the tables were not necessarily intended to capture all the Board's expenses, the modifications may provide more clarity.

A small business guide on complying with fruit, vegetable, and specialty crop marketing agreements and orders may be viewed at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&page=MarketingOrdersSmallBusinessGuide>. Any questions about the compliance guide should be sent to Jay Guerber at the previously mentioned address in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section.

After consideration of all relevant material presented, including the information and recommendation submitted by the Board and other available information, it is hereby found that this rule, as hereinafter set forth, will tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553, it is also found and determined that good cause exists for not postponing the effective date of this rule until 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register** because the 2008–09 marketing year began on September 1, 2008, and the marketing order requires that the rate of assessment for each year apply to all assessable walnuts handled during the year; the Board needs to have sufficient funds to pay its expenses which are incurred on a continuous basis; and handlers are aware of this action which was unanimously recommended by the Board at a public meeting and is similar to other assessment rate actions issued in past years. Also, a 15-day comment period was provided for in the proposed rule and no comments in opposition to the rule were received.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 984

Walnuts, Marketing agreements, Nuts, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

■ For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR part 984 is amended as follows:

PART 984—WALNUTS GROWN IN CALIFORNIA

■ 1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 984 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

■ 2. Section 984.347 is revised to read as follows:

§ 984.347 Assessment rate.

On and after September 1, 2008, an assessment rate of \$0.0158 per kernelweight pound is established for California merchantable walnuts.

Dated: September 29, 2008.

Lloyd C. Day,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. E8–23390 Filed 10–2–08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

12 CFR Part 204

[Regulation D; Docket No. R–1297]

Reserve Requirements of Depository Institutions

AGENCY: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Board is amending Regulation D, Reserve Requirements of Depository Institutions, to reflect the annual indexing of the reserve requirement exemption amount and the low reserve tranche for 2009. The Regulation D amendments set the amount of total reservable liabilities of each depository institution that is subject to a zero percent reserve requirement in 2009 at \$10.3 million, up from \$9.3 million in 2008. This amount is known as the reserve requirement exemption amount. The Regulation D amendment also sets the amount of net transaction accounts at each depository institution that is subject to a three percent reserve requirement in 2009 at \$44.4 million, up from \$43.9 million in 2008. This amount is known as the low reserve tranche. The adjustments to both of these amounts are derived using statutory formulas specified in the Federal Reserve Act.

The Board is also announcing changes in two other amounts, the nonexempt deposit cutoff level and the reduced reporting limit, that are used to determine the frequency at which depository institutions must submit deposit reports.

DATES: *Effective date:* November 3, 2008.

Compliance dates: For depository institutions that report deposit data weekly, the new low reserve tranche and reserve requirement exemption amount will apply to the fourteen-day reserve computation period that begins Tuesday, December 2, 2008, and the corresponding fourteen-day reserve maintenance period that begins Thursday, January 1, 2009. For depository institutions that report deposit data quarterly, the new low reserve tranche and reserve requirement exemption amount will apply to the seven-day reserve computation period that begins Tuesday, December 16, 2008, and the corresponding seven-day reserve maintenance period that begins Thursday, January 15, 2009. For all depository institutions, these new values of the nonexempt deposit cutoff level, the reserve requirement exemption amount, and the reduced reporting limit will be used to determine the frequency at which a depository institution submits deposit reports effective in either June or September 2009.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Sophia Allison, Senior Counsel (202/452–3565), Legal Division, or Margaret Gillis DeBoer, Senior Financial Analyst (202/452–3139), Division of Monetary Affairs; for users of Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) only, contact (202/263–4869); Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 20th and C Streets, NW., Washington, DC 20551.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 19(b)(2) of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 461(b)(2)) requires each depository institution to maintain reserves against its transaction accounts and nonpersonal time deposits, as prescribed by Board regulations, for the purpose of implementing monetary policy.

Section 11(a)(2) of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 248(a)(2)) authorizes the Board to require reports of liabilities and assets from depository institutions to enable the Board to conduct monetary policy. The Board's actions with respect to each of these provisions are discussed in turn below.

1. Reserve Requirements

Pursuant to section 19(b) of the Federal Reserve Act (Act), transaction account balances maintained at each depository institution are subject to reserve requirement ratios of zero, three, or ten percent. Section 19(b)(11)(A) of the Act (12 U.S.C. 461(b)(11)(A)) provides that a zero percent reserve

requirement shall apply at each depository institution to total reservable liabilities that do not exceed a certain amount, known as the reserve requirement exemption amount. Section 19(b)(11)(B) provides that, before December 31 of each year, the Board shall issue a regulation adjusting the reserve requirement exemption amount for the next calendar year if total reservable liabilities held at all depository institutions increase from one year to the next. No adjustment is made to the reserve requirement exemption amount if total reservable liabilities held at all depository institutions should decrease during the applicable time period. The Act requires the percentage increase in the reserve requirement exemption amount to be 80 percent of the increase in total reservable liabilities of all depository institutions over the one-year period that ends on the June 30 prior to the adjustment.

Total reservable liabilities of all depository institutions increased 13.0 percent (from \$4,211 billion to \$4,760 billion) between June 30, 2007, and June 30, 2008. Accordingly, the Board is amending Regulation D to increase the reserve requirement exemption amount by \$1.0 million, from \$9.3 million for 2008 to \$10.3 million for 2009.¹

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(2) of the Act (12 U.S.C. 461(b)(2)), transaction account balances maintained at each depository institution over the reserve requirement exemption amount and up to a certain amount, known as the low reserve tranche, are subject to a three percent reserve requirement. Transaction account balances over the low reserve tranche are subject to a ten percent reserve requirement. Section 19(b)(2) also provides that, before December 31 of each year, the Board shall issue a regulation adjusting the low reserve tranche for the next calendar year. The Act requires the adjustment in the low reserve tranche to be 80 percent of the percentage increase or decrease in total transaction accounts of all depository institutions over the one-year period that ends on the June 30 prior to the adjustment.

Net transaction accounts of all depository institutions increased 1.4 percent (from \$646 billion to \$655 billion) between June 30, 2007 and June 30, 2008. Accordingly, the Board is amending Regulation D (12 CFR part 204) to increase the low reserve tranche for net transaction accounts by \$0.5

million, from \$43.9 million for 2008 to \$44.4 million for 2009.

For depository institutions that file deposit reports weekly, the new low reserve tranche and reserve requirement exemption amount will be effective for the fourteen-day reserve computation period beginning Tuesday, December 2, 2008, and for the corresponding fourteen-day reserve maintenance period beginning Thursday, January 1, 2009. For depository institutions that report quarterly, the new low reserve tranche and reserve requirement exemption amount will be effective for the seven-day reserve computation period beginning Tuesday, December 16, 2008, and for the corresponding seven-day reserve maintenance period beginning Thursday, January 15, 2009.

2. Deposit Reports

Section 11(b)(2) of the Federal Reserve Act authorizes the Board to require depository institutions to file reports of their liabilities and assets as the Board may determine to be necessary or desirable to enable it to discharge its responsibility to monitor and control the monetary and credit aggregates. The Board screens depository institutions each year and assigns them to one of four deposit reporting panels (weekly reporters, quarterly reporters, annual reporters, or nonreporters). The panel assignment for annual reporters is effective in June of the screening year; the panel assignment for weekly and quarterly reporters is effective in September of the screening year.

In order to ease reporting burden, the Board permits smaller depository institutions to submit deposit reports less frequently than larger depository institutions. The Board permits depository institutions with net transaction accounts above the reserve requirement exemption amount but total transaction accounts, savings deposits, and small time deposits below a specified level (the “nonexempt deposit cutoff”) to report deposit data quarterly. Depository institutions with net transaction accounts above the reserve requirement exemption amount but with total transaction accounts, savings deposits, and small time deposits above the nonexempt deposit cutoff are required to report deposit data weekly. The Board requires certain large depository institutions to report weekly regardless of the level of their net transaction accounts if the depository institution’s total transaction accounts, savings deposits, and small time deposits exceeds a specified level (the “reduced reporting limit”). The nonexempt deposit cutoff level and the

reduced reporting limit are adjusted annually, by an amount equal to 80 percent of the increase, if any, in total transaction accounts, savings deposits, and small time deposits of all depository institutions over the one-year period that ends on the June 30 prior to the adjustment.

From June 30, 2007 to June 30, 2008, total transaction accounts, savings deposits, and small time deposits at all depository institutions increased 5 percent (from \$6,144 billion to \$6,443 billion). Accordingly, the Board is increasing the nonexempt deposit cutoff level to \$224.6 million for 2009. The Board is also increasing the reduced reporting limit to \$1,258 million for 2009.²

Beginning in 2009, the boundaries of the four deposit reporting panels will be defined as follows. Those depository institutions with net transaction accounts over \$10.3 million (the reserve requirement exemption amount) or with total transaction accounts, savings deposits, and small time deposits greater than or equal to \$1,258 million (the reduced reporting limit) are subject to detailed reporting, and must file a Report of Transaction Accounts, Other Deposits and Vault Cash (FR 2900 report) either weekly or quarterly. Of this group, those with total transaction accounts, savings deposits, and small time deposits greater than or equal to \$224.6 million (the nonexempt deposit cutoff level) are required to file the FR 2900 report each week, while those with total transaction accounts, savings deposits, and small time deposits less than \$224.6 million are required to file the FR 2900 report each quarter. Those depository institutions with net transaction accounts less than or equal to \$10.3 million (the reserve requirement exemption amount) and with total transaction accounts, savings deposits, and small time deposits less than \$1,258 million (the reduced reporting limit) are eligible for reduced reporting, and must either file a deposit report annually or not at all. Of this group, those with total deposits greater than \$10.3 million (but with total transaction accounts, savings deposits, and small time deposits less than \$1,258 million) are required to file the Annual Report of Deposits and Reservable Liabilities (FR 2910a) report annually, while those with total deposits less than or equal to \$10.3 million are not required to file a deposit report. A depository institution that adjusts

¹ Consistent with Board practice, the low reserve tranche and reserve requirement exemption amounts have been rounded to the nearest \$0.1 million.

² Consistent with Board practice, the nonexempt deposit cutoff level has been rounded to the nearest \$0.1 million, and the reduced reporting limit has been rounded to the nearest \$1 million.

reported values on its FR 2910a report in order to qualify for reduced reporting will be shifted to an FR 2900 reporting panel.

Notice and Regulatory Flexibility Act. The provisions of 5 U.S.C. 553(b) relating to notice of proposed rulemaking have not been followed in connection with the adoption of these amendments. The amendments involve expected, ministerial adjustments prescribed by statute and by the Board's policy concerning reporting practices. The adjustments in the reserve requirement exemption amount, the low reserve tranche, the nonexempt deposit cutoff level, and the reduced reporting limit serve to reduce regulatory burdens

on depository institutions. Accordingly, the Board finds good cause for determining, and so determines, that notice in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(b) is unnecessary. Consequently, the provisions of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601, do not apply to these amendments.

List of Subjects in 12 CFR Part 204

Banks, banking, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

■ For the reasons set forth in the preamble, the Board is amending 12 CFR part 204 as follows:

PART 204—RESERVE REQUIREMENTS OF DEPOSITORY INSTITUTIONS (REGULATION D)

■ 1. The authority citation for part 204 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 12 U.S.C. 248(a), 248(c), 371a, 461, 601, 611, and 3105.

■ 2. Section 204.9 is revised to read as follows:

§ 204.9 Reserve requirement ratios.

The following reserve requirement ratios are prescribed for all depository institutions, banking Edge and agreement corporations, and United States branches and agencies of foreign banks:

Category	Reserve requirement
Net transaction accounts:	
\$0 to \$10.3 million	0 percent of amount.
Over \$10.3 million and up to \$44.4 million	3 percent of amount.
Over \$44.4 million	\$1,023,000 plus 10 percent of amount over \$44.4 million.
Nonpersonal time deposits	0 percent.
Eurocurrency liabilities	0 percent.

By order of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, acting through the Director of the Division of Monetary Affairs under delegated authority, September 25, 2008.

Jennifer J. Johnson,

Secretary of the Board.

[FR Doc. E8-22944 Filed 10-2-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6210-01-P

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

13 CFR Part 124

RIN 3245-AF79

Small Disadvantaged Business Program

AGENCY: U.S. Small Business Administration.

ACTION: Interim final rule, with request for comments.

SUMMARY: This rule changes the requirements relating to which firms may certify their status as small disadvantaged businesses (SDBs) for purposes of federal prime contracts and subcontracts. Currently, only those firms that have applied to and been certified as SDBs by SBA may certify themselves to be SDBs for federal prime and subcontracts. This rule allows firms to self-represent their status for subcontracting purposes without first receiving any SDB certification. It also recognizes that the benefits of being an SDB for federal prime contracts has been greatly diminished over the past

years, and shifts the responsibility of identifying firms as SDBs for federal prime contracts to those limited agencies that have authority and chose to use price evaluation adjustments to SDBs.

DATES: *Effective Date:* This rule is effective October 3, 2008.

Comment Date: Comments must be received on or before November 3, 2008.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by RIN: 3245-AF79, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Mail, for paper, disk, or CD-ROM submissions: Joseph Loddio, Associate Administrator, Office of Business Development, 409 Third Street, SW., Mail Code, Washington, DC 20416.
- Hand Delivery/Courier: Joseph Loddio, Associate Administrator, Office of Business Development, 409 Third Street, SW., Washington, DC 20416.

SBA will post all comments on www.regulations.gov. If you wish to submit confidential business information (CBI) as defined in the User Notice at www.regulations.gov, please submit the information to LeAnn Delaney, Deputy Director, Office of Business Development, 409 Third Street, SW., Washington, DC 20416, or send an e-mail to LeAnn.Delaney@sba.gov. Highlight the information that you consider to be CBI and explain why you believe SBA should hold this information as

confidential. SBA will review the information and make the final determination of whether it will publish the information or not.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: LeAnn Delaney, Deputy Director, Office of Business Development, at (202) 205-5852, or LeAnn.Delaney@sba.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Section 1207 of the 1987 Defense Authorization Act (Pub. L. 99-661, codified in 10 U.S.C. 2323) for the first time established a 5 percent goal for all Department of Defense (DOD) contracts to be awarded to SDBs. To achieve the 5 percent SDB goal, the statute authorized the award of contracts to SDBs using less than full and open competitive procedures. Specifically, DOD developed through regulation a practice known as the "rule of two" for SDBs. Pursuant to the "rule of two," whenever a contracting officer identified two or more SDBs that it believed could perform a specific procurement at a fair and reasonable price, the contracting officer was required to set the contract aside for bidding exclusively among SDBs. In addition, SDBs would receive a 10% price evaluation adjustment in the evaluation of offers in an unrestricted or full and open competition. The DOD's SDB program was a self-certification program. SBA established eligibility criteria, but firms certified their SDB status for particular procurements. SBA