

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 No. FV-04-329]

United States Standards for Grades of Canned Pears

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; request for public comment.

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 Canned Pears. AMS received two petitions, one from a grower cooperative, the other from a processor, requesting that USDA change the character classification for Grade "B", slices, and diced, to read "the units are reasonably tender or tenderness may be variable within the unit."

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before March 22, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this notice. Comments must be sent to Karen L. Kaufman, 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; Fax (202) 690-1527, e-mail Karen.Kaufman@usda.gov. The United States Standards for Grades of Canned Pears is available either through the address cited above or by accessing the AMS Home page on the Internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/standards/frutcan.htm>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

AMS received two petitions, one from a grower cooperative and the other from a processor, requesting the revision of the United States Standards for Grades of Canned Pears. The standards are established under the authority of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627). The petitioners represent growers from Washington State, Oregon and parts of California.

The petitioners are requesting that USDA change the character classification for Grade "B", slices, and diced, to include the following: "the units are reasonably tender or the tenderness may be variable within the unit." The current standard contains this wording for character classifications for halves, quarters, pieces or irregular pieces and whole pears. The petitioners believe the change in the standard will improve the economic position of domestic growers of pears.

Agricultural Marketing Service

Prior to undertaking detailed work to develop a revision to the standard, AMS is soliciting for comments on the petitions submitted to change the United States Standards for Grades of Canned Pears.

This notice provides a 60 day comment period for interested parties to comment on changes to the standard. Should AMS conclude that there is an interest in the proposal, the Agency will develop a proposed revised standard that will 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: January 14, 2004.

A.J. Yates,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 04-1207 Filed 1-20-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket No. FV-04-376]

Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to notify all interested parties that the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will hold a Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (Committee) meeting that is open to the public. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) established the Committee to examine the full spectrum of issues faced by the fruit and vegetable industry and to provide suggestions and ideas to the Secretary of Agriculture on how USDA can tailor its programs to meet the fruit and vegetable industry's needs. This notice sets forth the schedule and location for the meeting.

DATES: Thursday, February 19, 2004, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Friday, February 20, 2004, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The Committee meeting will be held at the Hilton Hotel Crystal City, 2399 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Sandra K. Gardei, Marketing Specialist, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 2071-S, Stop 0235, Washington DC 20250-0235. Telephone: (202) 720-3618. Facsimile: (202) 720-0016. E-mail: Sandra.gardei@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (5 U.S.C. App.), the Secretary of Agriculture established the Committee in August 2001 to examine the full spectrum of issues faced by the fruit and vegetable industry and to provide suggestions and ideas to the Secretary on how USDA can tailor its programs to meet the fruit and vegetable industry's needs. The committee was rechartered in August 2003 and new members were appointed from industry nominations.

AMS Deputy Administrator for Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Robert C. Keeney, serves as the Committee's Executive Secretary and Sandra Gardei as the Designated Federal Official. Representatives from USDA mission areas and other government agencies affecting the fruit and vegetable industry will be called upon to participate in the Committee's meetings as determined by the Committee Chairperson. AMS is giving notice of the committee meeting to the public so that they may wish to attend and present their recommendations. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 19,