
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Agricultural Marketing Service****7 CFR Part 1030****[Docket No. AO-361-A39; DA-04-03-A]****Milk in the Upper Midwest Marketing Area; Order Amending the Order****AGENCY:** Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.**ACTION:** Final rule.

SUMMARY: This document adopts as a final rule, without change, an interim final rule concerning pooling standards and transportation credit provisions of the Upper Midwest Federal milk order. More than the required number of producers for the Upper Midwest marketing area approved the issuance of the final order amendments.

DATES: Effective February 1, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Gino Tosi, Marketing Specialist, USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs, Order Formulation and Enforcement Branch, STOP 0231—Room 2971, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250—0231, (202) 690—1366, e-mail: gino.tosi@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This document adopts as a final rule, without change, an interim final rule concerning pooling standards and transportation credit provisions of the Upper Midwest Federal milk order. Specifically, this final rule permanently adopts provisions to allow only supply plants located in the States that comprise the UMW marketing area to use milk delivered directly from producer farms for qualification purposes, eliminate the ability to pool diversions to nonpool plants located outside of the States that comprise the UMW marketing area as producer milk and limit the transportation credit received by handlers to the first 400 miles of applicable milk movements.

This administrative rule is governed by the provisions of Sections 556 and 557 of Title 5 of the United States Code and, therefore, is excluded from the requirements of Executive Order 12866.

This final rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. This rule is not intended to have retroactive effect. This rule will not preempt any state or local laws, regulations or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with the rule.

The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601–674), provides that administrative proceedings must be exhausted before parties may file suit in court. Under section 608(15)(A) of the Act, any handler subject to an order may request modification or exemption from such order by filing with the Department of Agriculture (USDA) a petition stating that the order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with the law. A handler is afforded the opportunity for a hearing on the petition. After a hearing, the Department would rule on the petition. The Act provides that the

District Court of the United States in any district in which the handler is an inhabitant, or has its principal place of business, has jurisdiction in equity to review the Department's ruling on the petition, provided a bill in equity is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

Regulatory Flexibility Act and Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*), the Agricultural Marketing Service has considered the economic impact of this action on small entities and has certified that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. For the purpose of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, a dairy farm is considered a "small business" if it has an annual gross revenue of less than \$750,000, and a dairy products manufacturer is a "small business" if it has fewer than 500 employees.

For the purposes of determining which dairy farms are "small businesses," the \$750,000 per year criterion was used to establish a marketing guideline of 500,000 pounds per month. Although this guideline does not factor in additional monies that may be received by dairy producers, it should be an inclusive standard for most "small" dairy farmers. For purposes of determining a handler's size, if the plant is part of a larger company operating multiple plants that collectively exceed the 500-employee limit, the plant will be considered a large business even if the local plant has fewer than 500 employees.

During August 2004, the month during which the hearing occurred, there were 15,608 dairy producers pooled on, and 60 handlers regulated by, the UMW order. Approximately 15,082 producers, or 97 percent, were considered small businesses based on the above criteria. Of the 60 handlers regulated by the UMW order during August 2004, approximately 49 handlers, or 82 percent, were considered "small businesses."

The adoption of the proposed pooling standards and transportation credit provisions serve to revise established criteria that determine the producer milk that has a reasonable association with and consistently serves the fluid needs of the Upper Midwest milk marketing area. Criteria for pooling are established on the basis of performance levels that are considered adequate to meet the Class I fluid needs and, by doing so, determine those that are eligible to share in the revenue that arises from the classified pricing of

milk. Criteria for pooling are established without regard to the size of any dairy industry organization or entity. The criteria established are applied in an equal fashion to both large and small businesses and do not have any different economic impact on small entities as opposed to large entities. Therefore, the amendments will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

A review of reporting requirements was completed under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35). It was determined that these amendments would have no impact on reporting, recordkeeping, or other compliance requirements because they would remain identical to the current requirements. No new forms are proposed and no additional reporting requirements would be necessary.

This action does not require additional information collection that requires clearance by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) beyond currently approved information collection. The primary sources of data used to complete the forms are routinely used in most business transactions. Forms require only a minimal amount of information, which can be supplied without data processing equipment or a trained statistical staff. Thus, the information collection and reporting burden is relatively small. Requiring the same reports for all handlers does not significantly disadvantage any handler that is smaller than the industry average.

Prior Documents in This Proceeding

Notice of Hearing: Issued June 16, 2004; published June 23, 2004 (69 FR 34963).

Notice of Hearing Delay: Issued July 14, 2004; published July 21, 2004 (69 FR 43538).

Tentative Partial Decision: Issued April 8, 2005; published April 14, 2005 (70 FR 19709).

Interim Final Rule: Issued May 26, 2005; published June 1, 2005 (70 FR 31321).

Final Partial Decision: Issued September 29, 2005; published October 5, 2005 (70 FR 58086).

Findings and Determinations

The findings and determinations hereinafter set forth supplement those that were made when the Upper Midwest order was first issued and when it was amended. The previous findings and determinations are hereby ratified and confirmed, except where they may conflict with those set forth herein.

The following findings are hereby made with respect to the Upper Midwest order:

(a) *Findings upon the basis of the hearing record.* Pursuant to the provisions of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601–674), and the applicable rules of practice and procedure governing the formulation of marketing agreements and marketing orders (7 CFR part 900), a public hearing was held upon certain proposed amendments to the tentative marketing agreement and to the order regulating the handling of milk in the Upper Midwest marketing area.

Upon the basis of the evidence introduced at such hearing and the record thereof it is found that:

(1) The Upper Midwest order, as hereby amended, and all of the terms and conditions thereof, will tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act;

(2) The parity prices of milk, as determined pursuant to section 2 of the Act, are not reasonable in view of the price of feeds, available supplies of feeds, and other economic conditions which affect market supply and demand for milk in the marketing area, and the minimum prices specified in the order, as hereby amended, are such prices as will reflect the aforesaid factors, insure a sufficient quantity of pure and wholesome milk, and be in the public interest; and

(3) The Upper Midwest order, as hereby amended, regulates the handling of milk in the same manner as, and is applicable only to persons in the respective classes of industrial and commercial activity specified in, a marketing agreement upon which a hearing has been held.

The amendments to these orders are known to handlers. A final partial decision containing the proposed amendments to these orders was issued on September 29, 2005.

The changes that result from these amendments will not require extensive preparation or substantial alteration in the method of operation for handlers. In view of the foregoing, it is hereby found and determined that good cause exists for making these order amendments effective February 1, 2006. It would be contrary to the public interest to delay the effective date of these amendments for 30 days after their publication in the **Federal Register**. (Sec. 553(d), Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. 551–559.)

(b) *Determinations.* It is hereby determined that:

(1) The refusal or failure of handlers (excluding cooperative associations specified in Sec. 8c(9) of the Act) of

more than 50 percent of the milk that is marketed within the specified marketing area to sign a proposed marketing agreement tends to prevent the effectuation of the declared policy of the Act;

(2) The issuance of this order amending the Upper Midwest order is the only practical means pursuant to the declared policy of the Act of advancing the interests of producers as defined in the order as hereby amended;

(3) The issuance of the order amending the Upper Midwest order is favored by at least two-thirds of the producers who were engaged in the production of milk for sale in the marketing area.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 1030

Milk marketing orders.

Order Relative to Handling

■ *It is therefore ordered*, that on and after the effective date hereof, the handling of milk in the Upper Midwest marketing area shall be in conformity to and in compliance with the terms and conditions of the order, as amended, and as hereby further amended, as follows:

PART 1030—MILK IN THE UPPER MIDWEST MARKETING AREA

■ The interim final rule amending 7 CFR part 1030 which was published at 70 FR 31321 on June 1, 2005, is adopted as a final rule without change.

Dated: December 5, 2005.

Lloyd C. Day,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 05–23820 Filed 12–8–05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P