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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Parts 1000, 1001, 1005, 1006, 1007, 1030, 1032, 1033, 1124, 1126 and 1131

[Docket No. AO-14-A74, et al.; DA-06-01]

Milk in the Northeast and Other Marketing Areas; Interim Order Amending the Orders

| 7 CFR part | Marketing area | AO Nos. |
|------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1001 | Northeast | AO-14-A74. |
| 1005 | Appalachian | AO-388-A18. |
| 1006 | Florida | AO-356-A39. |
| 1007 | Southeast | AO-366-A47. |
| 1030 | Upper Midwest ... | AO-361-A40. |
| 1032 | Central | AO-313-A49. |
| 1033 | Mideast | AO-166-A73. |
| 1124 | Pacific Northwest | AO-368-A35. |
| 1126 | Southwest | AO-231-A68. |
| 1131 | Arizona | AO-271-A40. |

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Interim final rule.

SUMMARY: This order amends the manufacturing (make) allowances contained in the Class III and Class IV product price formulas applicable to all Federal milk marketing orders. Specifically, this decision adopts the following make allowances: cheese—\$0.1682 per pound; butter—\$0.1202 per pound; nonfat dry milk (NFDm)—\$0.1570 per pound; and dry whey—\$0.1956 per pound. More than the required number of producers have approved the issuance of the interim orders as amended.

DATES: *Effective Date:* February 1, 2007.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jack Rower, Marketing Specialist, USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs, Order Formulation and Enforcement Branch, STOP 0231—Room 2971, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington,

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: 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 interim rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. This rule is not intended to have a retroactive effect. This rule will not preempt any State or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule.

The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (the Act), as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), provides that administrative proceedings must be exhausted before parties may file suit in court. Under Section 608c(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 (Department) 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 interim 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.

For the month of January 2006, the month the initial public hearing was held, the milk of 52,570 dairy farmers was pooled on the Federal order system. Of the total, 49,153 dairy farmers, or 94 percent, were considered small businesses. During the same month, 536 plants were regulated by or reported their milk receipts to be pooled and priced on a Federal order. Of the total, 286 plants, or 53 percent, were considered small businesses.

This decision provides that all orders be amended by changing the make allowances contained in the formulas used to compute component prices and the minimum class prices in all Federal milk orders. Specifically, the make allowance for butter would increase from \$0.1150 to \$0.1202 per pound; the make allowance for cheese would increase from \$0.1650 to \$0.1682 per pound; the make allowance for NFDm would increase from \$0.1400 to \$0.1570 per pound; and the make allowance for dry whey would increase from \$0.1590 to \$0.1956 per pound.

The adoption of these new make allowances serves to approximate the average cost of producing cheese, butter, NFDm and dry whey for manufacturing plants located in Federal milk marketing areas.

The established criteria for the make allowance changes are applied in an identical fashion to both large and small businesses and will not have any different impact on those businesses producing manufactured milk products. The Department's economic analysis¹ discusses impacts of the order amendments on order participants

¹ The Economic Analysis, Class III and Class IV Make Allowances, Tentative Final Decision is available on the Internet at http://www.ams.usda.gov/dairy/proposals/classIII_IV_make_all.htm.

including producers and manufacturers. Based on the economic analysis, we have concluded that the proposed amendments will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

The Agricultural Marketing Service is committed to complying with the E-Government Act to promote the use of the Internet and other information technologies to provide increased opportunities for citizen access to Government information and services, and for other purposes.

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 December 30, 2005; published January 5, 2006 (71 FR 545).

Notice of Intent To Reconvene Hearing: Issued June 28, 2006; published June 23, 2006 (71 FR 36715).

Notice To Reconvene Hearing: Issued August 31, 2006; published September 6, 2006 (71 FR 52502).

Tentative Final Decision: Issued November 17, 2006; published November 22, 2006 (71 FR 67467).

Findings and Determinations

The findings and determinations hereinafter set forth supplement those that were made when the Northeast and other marketing orders were first issued and when they were 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 Northeast and other aforesaid marketing orders:

(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 agreements and to the orders regulating the handling of milk in the Northeast and other marketing areas.

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

(1) The said orders, as hereby amended on an interim basis, 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 areas, and the minimum prices specified in the orders, as hereby amended on an interim basis, are such prices as will reflect the aforesaid factors, ensure a sufficient quantity of pure and wholesome milk, and be in the public interest; and

(3) The said orders, as hereby amended on an interim basis, regulate the handling of milk in the same manner as, and are applicable only to persons in the respective classes of industrial and commercial activity specified in, the marketing agreements upon which a hearing has been held.

(b) *Additional Findings.* It is necessary and in the public interest to make these interim amendments to the Northeast and other marketing orders effective February 1, 2007. Any delay beyond that date would tend to disrupt the orderly marketing of milk in the aforesaid marketing areas.

The interim amendments to this order are known to handlers. The tentative partial decision containing the proposed amendments to the orders was issued on November 17, 2006.

The changes that result from these interim 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 interim order amendments effective on February 1, 2007.

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

(1) The refusal or failure of handlers (excluding cooperative associations specified in Section 8c(9) of the Act) of more than 50 percent of the milk, which is marketed within the specified marketing areas, to sign a proposed marketing agreement, tends to prevent the effectuation of the declared policy of the Act;

(2) The issuance of this interim order amending the Northeast and other

marketing orders is the only practical means pursuant to the declared policy of the Act of advancing the interests of producers as defined in the orders as hereby amended;

(3) The issuance of the interim order amending the Northeast and other marketing orders is favored by at least two-thirds of the producers who were engaged in the production of milk for sale in the respective marketing areas.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Parts 1000, 1001, 1005, 1006, 1007, 1030, 1032, 1033, 1124, 1126, and 1131

Milk marketing orders.

Orders Relative to Handling

■ *It is therefore ordered*, that on and after the effective date hereof, the handling of milk in the Northeast and other marketing areas shall be in conformity and in compliance with the terms and conditions of the orders, as amended, and as hereby further amended on an interim basis, as follows:

■ 1. The authority citation for 7 CFR parts 1000, 1001, 1005, 1006, 1007, 1030, 1032, 1033, 1124, 1126, and 1131 is revised to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674, and 7253.

PART 1000—GENERAL PROVISIONS OF FEDERAL MILK MARKETING ORDERS

■ 2. Section 1000.50 is amended by:

- a. Revising paragraph (l);
- b. Revising paragraph (m);
- c. Revising paragraph (n)(2);
- d. Revising paragraph (n)(3)(i);
- e. Revising paragraph (o); and
- f. Revising paragraph (q)(3).

The revisions read as follows:

§ 1000.50 Class prices, component prices, and advanced pricing factors.

* * * * *

(l) *Butterfat price.* The butterfat price per pound, rounded to the nearest one-hundredth cent, shall be the U.S. average NASS AA Butter survey price reported by the Department for the month, less 12.02 cents, with the result multiplied by 1.20.

(m) *Nonfat solids price.* The nonfat solids price per pound, rounded to the nearest one-hundredth cent, shall be the U.S. average NASS nonfat dry milk survey price reported by the Department for the month, less 15.70 and multiplying the result by 0.99.

(n) * * *

(1) * * *

(2) Subtract 16.82 cents from the price computed pursuant to paragraph (n)(1) of this section and multiply the result by 1.383;

(3) * * *

(i) Subtract 16.82 cents from the price computed pursuant to paragraph (n)(1) of this section and multiply the result by 1.572; and * * *

(o) *Other solids price.* The other solids price per pound, rounded to the nearest one-hundredth cent, shall be the U.S. average NASS dry whey survey price reported by the Department for the month minus 19.56 cents, with the result multiplied by 1.03. * * *

(q) * * *

(3) An advanced butterfat price per pound, rounded to the nearest one-hundredth cent, shall be calculated by computing a weighted average of the 2 most recent U.S. average NASS AA Butter survey prices announced before the 24th day of the month, subtracting 12.02 cents from this average, and multiplying the result by 1.20.

Dated: December 26, 2006.

Lloyd C. Day,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 06-9943 Filed 12-27-06; 9:53 am]

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