

AMS NEWS RELEASE

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EXHIBIT NO. 3

Metropolitan

USDA SETS HEARING ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CENTRAL MILK MARKETING ORDER

WASHINGTON, Sept. 22, 2004 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) today announced that it will hold a public hearing to consider proposals amending the Central Federal Milk Marketing Order. The hearing will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 18, at the Hilton Kansas City Airport, 8801 NW 112th St., Kansas City, MO 64153.

The hearing will consider proposals that would modify performance standards for supply plants, adjust diversion limits, modify the "touch base" provision, limit the pooling of milk that was not pooled in prior months and establish transportation and assembly credits. Other proposals under consideration would eliminate all supply plant provisions, establish a "dairy farmer for other markets" provision, eliminate or modify "split plant" provisions, eliminate or modify system pooling for supply plants and modify handler payment dates from the producer settlement fund. Evidence will be taken at the hearing to determine whether marketing conditions exist that warrant omission of a recommended decision for any of the proposals.

The hearing notice appears as a proposed rule in today's Federal Register. Copies of the hearing notice can be obtained from the USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs, STOP 0231, Rm. 2971, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0231. The hearing notice is available on the AMS Web site at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/dairy>.

The hearing notice and information about the hearing is available by writing the market administrator office as follows: Donald R. Nicholson, USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs, P.O. Box 14650, Shawnee Mission, KS 66285-4650, by phoning (913) 495-9300 or by e-mail at market.administrator@fmcentral.com.

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