



PROGRAM

ANNOUNCEMENT

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

United States Department of Agriculture _ 1400 Independence Ave., SW _ Room 3510-S
Washington, DC 20250 _ (202) 720-8998 _ World Wide Web: <http://www.ams.usda.gov>

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Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998
becky.unkenhol@usda.gov
Billy Cox (202) 720-8998
billy.cox@usda.gov

USDA ANNOUNCES TENTATIVE FINAL DECISION TO AMEND THE MIDEAST MILK MARKETING ORDER

WASHINGTON, D.C. June 10, 2002 - The United States Department of Agriculture today announced a tentative final decision that adopts provisions to amend the current pooling provisions of the Mideast Federal milk marketing order. This decision is based on testimony and evidence given at a public hearing held Oct. 23-24, 2001, in Wadsworth, Ohio.

This decision would eliminate unneeded and change inadequate pooling standards that have resulted in inappropriately pooled milk on the Mideast order. The amendments would: 1) eliminate automatic pool plant status for the 6-month period of March through August, 2) not include milk shipments to a distributing plant regulated by another Federal milk order as pool-qualifying shipments under the Mideast order, 3) eliminate the "split plant" feature which provides for designating a portion of a pool plant as a nonpool plant, provided that the nonpool portion was physically separate and operated separately from the pool side, and 4) establish a "net shipments" standard for supply plant deliveries to the order's distributing plants for the purpose of meeting the shipping standard. This decision also would increase the number of days that the milk of a producer needs to be delivered to a pool plant before being eligible for diversion to nonpool plants and institutes year- round diversion limits adjusted seasonally for all pool plants.

The tentative final decision will be published in the June 11 Federal Register. Interested persons have until Aug. 12 to file comments in response to the tentative decision. USDA will determine whether dairy farmers approve the amended orders.

For additional information about the decision contact: David Z. Walker, Market Administrator; USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs; 7851 Freeway Circle, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130; Tel. (440) 826-3220; e-mail: dwalker@fmmaclev.com.

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