



USDA Sets Referendum for Proposed Amendments to Marketing Order for Citrus Grown in Florida

AMS No. 028-09

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WASHINGTON, April 15, 2009 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture will conduct a referendum on proposed amendments to the federal marketing order regulating the handling of fresh citrus produced in Florida.

The referendum will be held May 4-18, 2009, to determine support for the amendments. Ballot material will be mailed to all known growers of the regulated citrus varieties in Florida. To be eligible to vote, a grower must have produced oranges, grapefruit, tangerines or tangelos in Florida during the representative period of Aug. 1, 2007, through July 31, 2008.

The proposed amendments are based on the hearing record and evidence presented at a public hearing held by USDA on Feb. 12, 2008, in Winter Haven, Fla. The proposed amendments submitted by the Citrus Administrative Committee, which administers the order locally, include:

- Adding authority to conduct research and marketing programs;
- Revising committee representation by cooperative entities; and
- Modifying committee meeting procedures.

Notice of the referendum was published in the April 13, 2009, Federal Register. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service will mail ballots and voting instructions to all growers of record. Eligible growers not receiving ballots may request them from Christian Nissen, USDA, AMS, Southeast Marketing Field Office, 799 Overlook Drive, Suite A, Winter Haven, FL 33884; by calling (863) 324-3375; or faxing (863) 325-8793.

The proposed amendments would become effective only if approved by either two-thirds of the growers voting in the referendum, or by those representing at least two-thirds of the volume of fresh citrus grown by those voting in the referendum.

Authority for federal marketing orders rests in the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937.