

imported into the United States by the importers. The rate of assessment for importers who are subject to the plan shall be equal to the combined rate for producers and handlers.

(h) Refunds

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the plan shall provide that, notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, any watermelon producer or handler (or importer who is subject to the plan) against whose watermelons an assessment is made and collected under this chapter and who is not in favor of supporting the research, development, advertising, and promotion program provided for under this chapter shall have the right to demand a refund of the assessment from the Board, under regulations, and on a form and within a time period (not less than 90 days), prescribed by the Board and approved by the Secretary. A producer or handler (or importer who is subject to the plan) who timely makes demand in accord with the regulations, on submission of proof satisfactory to the Board that the producer, handler, or importer paid the assessment for which the refund is sought, shall receive such refund within 60 days after demand therefor.

(2) If approved in the referendum required by section 4914(b) of this title relating to the elimination of the assessment refund under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall amend the plan that is in effect on the day before December 14, 1993, to eliminate the refund provision.

(3)(A) Notwithstanding paragraph (2) and subject to subparagraph (B), if importers are subject to the plan, the plan shall provide that an importer of less than 150,000 pounds of watermelons per year shall be entitled to apply for a refund that is based on the rate of assessment paid by domestic producers.

(B) The Secretary may adjust the quantity of the weight exemption specified in subparagraph (A) on the recommendation of the Board after an opportunity for public notice and opportunity for comment in accordance with section 553 of title 5, and without regard to sections 556 and 557 of such title, to reflect significant changes in the 5-year average yield per acre of watermelons produced in the United States.

(i) Submission of programs or projects; approval by Secretary

The plan shall provide that the Board, subject to the provisions of subsections (e), (f), and (g), shall develop and submit to the Secretary, for the Secretary's approval, any research, development, advertising, or promotion program or project, and that a program or project must be approved by the Secretary before becoming effective.

(j) Contract authority

The plan shall provide the Board with authority to enter into contracts or agreements, with the approval of the Secretary, for the development and carrying out of research, development, advertising, or promotion programs or projects, and the payment of the cost thereof with funds collected under this chapter.

(k) Recordkeeping; accounting and audit reports

The plan shall provide that the Board shall (1) maintain books and records, (2) prepare and sub-

mit to the Secretary such reports from time to time as may be prescribed for appropriate accounting with respect to the receipt and disbursement of funds entrusted to it, and (3) cause a complete audit report to be submitted to the Secretary at the end of each fiscal period.

(l) Certification

The plan shall provide that the Board shall have the authority to establish rules for certifying whether a person meets the definition of a producer under section 4902(5) of this title.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XVI, §1647, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1624; Pub. L. 103-189, §§4-7, 8(d)-(f), (k)(4), 9(b), Dec. 14, 1993, 107 Stat. 2260-2262, 2264.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1993—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 103-189, §§4, 8(d), designated existing provisions as par. (1), substituted "other members of the Board" for "producer and handler members of the Board" in second sentence, and added pars. (2) and (3).

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 103-189, §§5(1), 6, substituted "payment of the assessments to the Board." for "collection of the assessments by the Board" and inserted at end "In fixing or changing the rate of assessment pursuant to the plan, the Secretary shall comply with the notice and comment procedures established under section 553 of title 5. Sections 556 and 557 of such title shall not apply with respect to fixing or changing the rate of assessment."

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 103-189, §8(k)(4)(A), substituted "the following:" for "that—" in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (g)(1). Pub. L. 103-189, §§5(2), 8(k)(4)(B), substituted "Funds received" for "funds collected" and a period for semicolon at end.

Subsec. (g)(2). Pub. L. 103-189, §8(k)(4)(C), substituted "No" for "no" and a period for semicolon at end.

Subsec. (g)(3). Pub. L. 103-189, §§5(2), 8(k)(4)(D), substituted "No" for "no", "received" for "collected", and a period for "; and" at end.

Subsec. (g)(4). Pub. L. 103-189, §8(e)(1), substituted "Assessments" for "assessments" and inserted "in the case of producers and handlers" after "such assessments".

Subsec. (g)(5). Pub. L. 103-189, §8(e)(2), added par. (5).

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 103-189, §§7, 8(f), designated existing provisions as par. (1), substituted "Except as provided in paragraph (2), the" for "The", inserted "(or importer who is subject to the plan)" after "or handler" the first two places appearing, substituted ", handler, or importer paid the assessment" for "or handler paid the assessment", and added pars. (2) and (3).

Subsec. (l). Pub. L. 103-189, §9(b), added subsec. (l).

§ 4907. Permissive terms in plans

(a) Description of terms and provisions; prohibition

Any plan issued under this chapter may contain one or more of the terms and provisions described in this section, but except as provided in section 4906 of this title no others.

(b) Exemptions

The plan may provide for the exemption, from the provisions of the plan, of watermelons used for nonfood uses, and authority for the Board to establish satisfactory safeguards against improper use of such exemption.

(c) Designation of different handler payment and reporting schedules for assessments

The plan may provide for the designation of different handler payment and reporting sched-

ules with respect to assessments, as provided for in sections 4906 and 4908 of this title, to recognize differences in marketing practices and procedures used in different production areas.

(d) Advertising and sales promotion programs or projects

The plan may provide for the establishment, issuance, effectuation, and administration of appropriate programs or projects for the advertising and other sales promotion of watermelons and for the disbursement of necessary funds for such purposes. Any such program or project shall be directed toward increasing the general demand for watermelons, and promotional activities shall comply with the provisions of section 4906(g) of this title.

(e) Marketing objectives of research and development projects and studies

The plan may provide for establishing and carrying out research and development projects and studies to the end that the marketing and use of watermelons may be encouraged, expanded, improved, or made more efficient, and for the disbursement of necessary funds for such purposes.

(f) Reserve funds; limitation

The plan may provide authority for the accumulation of reserve funds from assessments collected under this chapter, to permit an effective and continuous coordinated program of research, development, advertising, and promotion in years when watermelon production and assessment income may be reduced, except that the total reserve fund may not exceed the amount budgeted for two years operation.

(g) Foreign market sales

The plan may provide for the use of funds from assessments collected under this chapter, with the approval of the Secretary, for the development and expansion of sales of watermelons in foreign markets.

(h) Other terms and conditions

The plan may contain terms and conditions incidental to and not inconsistent with the terms and conditions specified in this chapter and necessary to effectuate the other provisions of the plan.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XVI, § 1648, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1625.)

§ 4908. Assessment procedures

(a) Persons responsible for remittance of assessments; recordkeeping; equal and unitary assessments

(1) Each handler required to pay assessments under a plan, as provided for under section 4906(f) of this title, shall be responsible for payment to the Board, as it may direct, of the assessments. A handler also shall collect from any producer, or shall deduct from the proceeds paid to any producer, on whose watermelons a producer assessment is made, the assessments required to be paid by the producer. The handler shall remit producer assessments to the Board as the Board directs. Such handler shall maintain a separate record with respect to each producer for whom watermelons were handled. Such records shall indicate the total quantity of wa-

termelons handled by the handler, including those handled for producers and for the handler, the total quantity of watermelons handled by the handler that are included under the terms of the plan, as well as those that are exempt under the plan, and such other information as may be prescribed by the Board. To facilitate the collection and payment of assessments, the Board may designate different handlers or classes of handlers to recognize differences in marketing practices or procedures used in any State or area. The handler shall be assessed an equal amount as the producer. No more than one assessment on a producer nor more than one assessment on a handler shall be made on any watermelons.

(2)(A) If importers are subject to the plan, each importer required to pay assessments under the plan shall be responsible for payment of the assessment to the Board, as the Board may direct.

(B) The assessment on imported watermelons shall be equal to the combined rate for domestic producers and handlers and shall be paid by the importer to the Board at the time of the entry of the watermelons into the United States.

(C) Each importer required to pay assessments under the plan shall maintain a separate record that includes a record of—

(i) the total quantity of watermelons imported into the United States that are included under the terms of the plan;

(ii) the total quantity of watermelons that are exempt from the plan; and

(iii) such other information as may be prescribed by the Board.

(D) No more than 1 assessment shall be made on any imported watermelon.

(b) Inspection of records

Handlers and importers responsible for payment of assessments under subsection (a) shall maintain and make available for inspection by the Secretary such books and records as required by the plan and file reports at the times, in the manner, and having the content prescribed by the plan, to the end that information and data shall be made available to the Board and to the Secretary that is appropriate or necessary to the effectuation, administration, or enforcement of this chapter or of any plan or regulation issued under this chapter.

(c) Confidentiality of information; disclosure authority; general or violation statements; penalties; removal from office

All information obtained under subsections (a) and (b) shall be kept confidential by all officers and employees of the Department of Agriculture and of the Board, and only such information so furnished or acquired as the Secretary deems relevant shall be disclosed by them, and then only in a suit or administrative hearing brought at the direction, or on the request, of the Secretary, or to which the Secretary or any officer of the United States is a party, and involving the plan with reference to which the information to be disclosed was furnished or acquired. Nothing in this subsection shall be deemed to prohibit—

(1) the issuance of general statements based on the reports of a number of handlers or im-