



Pistachio Marketing Order Referendum Scheduled Proposed amendments will set standards for exports

AMS No. 181-11

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 15, 2011 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture will conduct a referendum on proposed federal marketing order amendments regulating the handling of California, Arizona and New Mexico produced pistachios.

The referendum, scheduled for Oct. 3 to Oct. 14, 2011, will gauge voter support for amendments recommended by the administrative committee for Pistachios and a proposed rule issued in the Sept. 15, Federal Register. Ballot materials will be mailed to all known growers producing pistachios in California, Arizona and New Mexico between Sept. 1, 2010, and Aug. 31, 2011.

If approved by voters, the proposed amendments would:

- Provide authority to establish aflatoxin sampling, analysis and inspection requirements for shipments of pistachios to export markets, including authority to establish different regulations for different markets
- Provide authority to establish quality and inspection requirements for shipments of pistachios to export markets, including authority to establish different regulations for different markets
- Change a related section of the order concerning substandard pistachios to conform to the proposed addition of export authority, and
- Correct an erroneous cross-reference to another section of the order

The amendments become effective if either two-thirds of the growers voting, or producers accounting for two-thirds of the volume of pistachios represented in the referendum, vote to approve the amendments. Notice of the referendum was published in the Sept. 15, 2011, Federal Register.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will mail ballots and voting instructions to all eligible growers of record. Eligible growers who do not receive a ballot may contact Rose Aguayo or Andrea Ricci at USDA's California Marketing Field Office, 2202 Monterey Street, Fresno, Calif. 93721; phone: (559) 487-5901; fax (559) 487-5906.

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