

AUTHORITY: 7 U.S.C. 2701-2718 and 7 U.S.C. 7401.

Subpart—Referendum Procedures

SOURCE: 75 FR 55256, Sept. 10, 2010, unless otherwise noted.

§1250.200 Referenda.

Referenda for the purpose of ascertaining whether the issuance by the Secretary of Agriculture of an Egg Research and Promotion Order, or the continuance, termination, or suspension of such an order, is approved or favored by producers shall, unless supplemented or modified by the Secretary, be conducted in accordance with this subpart.

§1250.201 Definitions.

(a) *Act* means the Egg Research and Consumer Information Act and as it may be amended (Pub. L. 93-428, 7 U.S.C. 2701 *et seq.*).

(b) *Administrator* means the administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, with power to redelegate, or any other officer or employee of the Department to whom authority has been delegated or may hereafter be delegated to act in the Administrator's stead.

(c) *Egg producer or producer* means any person who either is an egg farmer who acquires and owns laying hens, chicks, and/or started pullets for the purpose of and is engaged in the production of commercial eggs; or is a person who supplied or supplies laying hens, chicks, and/or started pullets to an egg farmer for the purpose of producing commercial eggs pursuant to an oral or written contractual agreement for the production of commercial eggs. Such person is deemed to be the owner of such laying hens unless it is established in writing, to the satisfaction of the Secretary or the Egg Board, that actual ownership of the laying hens is in some other party to the contract. In the event the party to an oral contract who supplied or supplies the laying hens cannot be readily identified by the Secretary or the Egg Board, the person who has immediate possession and control over the laying hens at the egg production facility shall be deemed to be the owner of such hens unless written notice is provided to the Secretary or the Egg Board, signed by the parties to said oral contract, clearly stating that the eggs are being produced under a contractual agreement and identifying the party (or parties) under said contract who is the owner of the hens.

(d) *Order* means the order or any amendment thereto promulgated pursuant to the act with respect to which the Secretary has directed that a referendum be conducted.

(e) *Person* means any individual, group of individuals, partnership, corporation, association, cooperative, or any other entity.

(f) *Referendum agent* means the individual or individuals designated by the Secretary to conduct the referendum.

(g) *Representative period* means the period designated by the Secretary pursuant to section 9 of the Act (7 U.S.C. 2708).

(h) *Secretary* means the Secretary of Agriculture or any other officer or employee of the Department of Agriculture to whom there has heretofore been delegated, or to whom there may be hereafter delegated, the authority to act in the Secretary's stead.

§1250.202 Voting.

(a) Each person who is a producer, as defined in this subpart, at the time of the referendum, who was engaged in the production of commercial eggs during the representative period, and who is not exempt from the provisions of the order as provided for in §1250.348 thereof, shall be entitled to only one vote in the referendum.

(b) Proxy voting is not authorized, but an officer or employee of a corporate producer, or an administrator, executor, or trustee of a producing estate, or an authorized representative of any other entity may cast a ballot on behalf of such producer or estate. Any individual so voting in a referendum shall certify that such individual is an officer or employee of the corporate producer, or an administrator, executor, or trustee of the producing estate, or an authorized representative of such other entity, and that such individual has the authority to take such action. Upon request of the referendum agent, the individual shall submit adequate evidence of his authority.

(c) Each producer shall be entitled to cast only one ballot in the referendum.

§1250.203 Instructions.

The referendum agent shall conduct the referendum, in the manner herein provided, under supervision of the Administrator. The Administrator may prescribe additional instructions, not inconsistent with the provisions hereof, to govern the procedure to be followed by the referendum agent. Such agent shall:

(a) Determine the time of commencement and termination of the period of the referendum, and the time when all ballots must be received by the referendum agent.

(b) Determine whether ballots may be cast by mail, at polling places, at meetings of producers, or by any combination of the foregoing.

(c) Provide ballots and related material to be used in the referendum. Ballot material shall provide for recording essential information for ascertaining whether the person voting or on whose behalf the vote is cast, is an eligible voter, and the total volume of commercial eggs produced during a representative period.

(d) Give reasonable advance notice of the referendum:

(1) By utilizing available media or public information sources, without incurring advertising expense, to publicize the dates, places, method of voting, eligibility requirements, and other pertinent information. Such sources of publicity may include, but are not limited to, print and radio; and

(2) By such other means as the agent may deem advisable.

(e) Make available to producers instructions on voting, appropriate registration, ballot, and certification forms, and, except in the case of a referendum on the termination or continuance of an order, a summary of the terms and conditions of the order: Provided, that no person who claims to be qualified to vote shall be refused a ballot.

(f) If the ballots are to be cast by mail, cause all the material specified in paragraph (e) of this section to be mailed to each eligible producer whose name and address are known to the Secretary or the referendum agent.

(g) If the ballots are to be cast at polling places or meetings, determine the necessary number of polling or meeting places, designate them, announce the time of each meeting or the hours during which each polling place will be open, provide the material specified in paragraph (e) of this section, and provide for appropriate custody of ballot forms and delivery to the referendum agent of ballots cast.

(h) At the conclusion of the referendum, canvass the ballots, tabulate the results, and except as otherwise directed, report the outcome to the Administrator and promptly thereafter submit the following:

(1) All ballots received by the agent and appointees, together with a certificate to the effect that the ballots listed are all of the ballots cast and received by the agent and appointees during the referendum period;

(2) A tabulation of all challenged ballots deemed to be invalid; and

(3) A report of the referendum including a detailed statement explaining the method used in giving publicity to the referendum and showing other information pertinent to the manner in which the referendum was conducted.

§1250.204 Subagents.

The referendum agent may appoint any person or persons deemed necessary or desirable to assist the agent in performing such agent's functions of this subpart. Each individual so appointed may be authorized by the agent to perform, in accordance with the requirements herein set forth, any or all of the following functions (which, in the absence of such appointment, shall be performed by said agent):

(a) Give public notice of the referendum in the manner specified herein;

(b) Preside at a meeting where ballots are to be cast or as poll officer at a polling place;

(c) See the ballots and the aforesaid texts are distributed to producers and receive any ballots which are cast; and

(d) Record the name and address of each person casting a ballot with said subagent and inquire, as deemed appropriate, into the eligibility of such persons to vote in the referendum.

§1250.205 Ballots.

The referendum agent and subagents shall accept all ballots cast; but should they, or any of them, deem that a ballot should be challenged for any reason, the agent or subagent shall endorse above their signature, on the ballot, a statement to the effect that such ballot was challenged, by whom challenged, the reasons therefore, and the results of any investigations made with respect thereto, and the disposition thereof. Invalid ballots shall not be counted.

§1250.206 Referendum report.

Except as otherwise directed, the Administrator shall prepare and submit to the Secretary a report on the results of the referendum, the manner in which it was conducted, the extent and kind of public notice given, and other information pertinent to analysis of the referendum and its results.

§1250.207 Confidential information.

The ballots cast or the manner in which any person voted and all information furnished to, compiled by, or in the possession of the referendum agent shall be regarded as confidential. The ballots and other information or reports that reveal, or tend to reveal, the vote of any person covered under the Order and the voter list shall be strictly confidential and shall not be disclosed.

Subpart—Egg Research and Promotion Order

SOURCE: 40 FR 59190, Dec. 22, 1975, unless otherwise noted.

DEFINITIONS

§1250.301 Secretary.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture or any other officer or employee of the Department of Agriculture to whom there has heretofore been delegated, or to whom there may hereafter be delegated, the authority to act in his stead.

§1250.302 Act.

Act means the Egg Research and Consumer Information Act and as it may be amended (Pub. L. 93-428).

§1250.303 Fiscal period.

Fiscal period means the calendar year unless the Egg Board, with the approval of the Secretary, selects some other budgetary period.

§1250.304 Egg Board or Board.

Egg Board or Board or other designatory term adopted by such Board, with the approval of the Secretary, means the administrative body established pursuant to §1250.326.

§1250.305 Egg producer or producer.

Egg producer or producer means any person who either:

(a) Is an egg farmer who acquires and owns laying hens, chicks, and/or started pullets for the purpose of and is engaged in the production of commercial eggs; or

(b) Is a person who supplied or supplies laying hens, chicks, and/or started pullets to an egg farmer for the purpose of producing commercial eggs pursuant to an oral or written contractual agreement for the production of commercial eggs. Such person is deemed to be the owner of such laying hens unless it is established in writing, to the satisfaction of the Secretary or the Egg Board, that actual ownership of the laying hens is in some other party to the contract. In the event the party to an oral contract who supplied or supplies the laying hens cannot be readily identified by the Secretary or the Egg Board, the person who has immediate possession and control over the laying hens at the egg production facility shall be deemed to be the owner of such hens unless written notice is provided to the Secretary or the Egg Board, signed by the parties to said oral contract, clearly stating that the eggs are being produced under a contractual agreement and identifying the party (or parties) under said contract who is the owner of the hens.

§1250.306 Commercial eggs or eggs.

Commercial eggs or eggs means eggs from domesticated chickens which are sold for human consumption either in shell egg form or for further processing into egg products.

§1250.307 Person.

Person means any individual, group of individuals, partnership, corporation, association, cooperative, or any other entity.

§1250.308 United States.

United States means the 48 contiguous States of the United States of America and the District of Columbia.

§1250.309 Handler.

Handler means any person who receives or otherwise acquires eggs from an egg producer, and processes, prepares for marketing, or markets, such eggs, including eggs of his own production.

§1250.310 Promotion.

Promotion means any action, including paid advertising, to advance the image or desirability of eggs, egg products, spent fowl, or products of spent fowl.

§1250.311 Research.

Research means any type of research to advance the image, desirability, marketability, production, or quality of eggs, egg products, spent fowl, or products of spent fowl, or the evaluation of such research.

§1250.312 Marketing.

Marketing means the sale or other disposition of commercial eggs, egg products, spent fowl, or products of spent fowl in any channel of commerce.

§1250.313 Eligible organization.

Eligible organization means any organization, association, or cooperative which represents egg producers of any egg producing area of the United States certified by the Secretary pursuant to §1250.356.

§1250.314 Plans and projects.

Plans and projects means those research, consumer and producer education, advertising, marketing, product development, and promotion plans, studies, or projects pursuant to §1250.341.

§1250.315 Part and subpart.

Part means the Egg Research and Promotion Order and all rules, regulations, and supplemental order issued pursuant to the act and the order. "Subpart" refers to the aforesaid order or any other portion or segment of this part.

§1250.316 Representative of a producer.

Representative of a producer means the owner, officer, or an employee of a producer who has been duly authorized to act in the place and stead of the producer.

EGG BOARD

§1250.326 Establishment and membership.

There is hereby established an Egg Board, hereinafter called the "Board," composed of 18 egg producers or representatives of egg producers, and 18 specific alternates, all appointed by the Secretary from nominations submitted by eligible organizations, associations, or cooperatives, or by other producers pursuant to §1250.328.

§1250.327 Term of office.

The members of the Board, and their alternates, shall serve for terms of 2 years, except initial appointments shall be, proportionately, for terms of 2 and 3 years. Each member and alternate member shall continue to serve until his successor is appointed by the Secretary and has qualified. No member shall serve for more than three consecutive terms.

§1250.328 Nominations.

All nominations authorized under §1250.326 shall be made in the following manner:

(a) Within 30 days of the approval of this order by referendum, nominations shall be submitted to the Secretary for each geographic area as specified in paragraph (d) of this section by eligible organizations, associations, or cooperatives certified pursuant to §1250.356, or, if the Secretary determines that a substantial number of egg producers are not members of, or their interests are not represented by, any such eligible organization, association, or cooperative, then from nominations made by such egg producers in the manner authorized by the Secretary;

(b) After the establishment of the initial Board, the nominations for subsequent Board members and alternates shall be submitted to the Secretary not less than 60 days prior to the expiration of the terms of the members and alternates previously appointed to the Board;

(c) Where there is more than one eligible organization, association, or cooperative within each geographic area, as defined by the Secretary, they may caucus for the purpose of jointly nominating two qualified persons for each member and for each alternate member to be appointed. If joint agreement is not reached with respect to any such nominations, or if no caucus is held within a defined geographic area, each eligible organization, association, or cooperative may submit to the Secretary two nominations for each appointment to be made;

(d) The number of members of the initial Board, and their alternates, who shall be appointed from each area are: Area 1-3, Area 2-4, Area 3-2, Area 4-2, Area 5-4, and Area 6-3, for a total of 18 members from all areas. Changes to the Board as provided in paragraph (e) of this section shall be accomplished

by determining the percentage of United States egg production in each area times 18 (total Board membership) and rounding to the nearest whole number; and

(e) After the establishment of the initial Board, the area grouping of the 48 contiguous States of the United States, including the area distribution of the 18 members of the Board and their alternates, shall be reviewed at any time not to exceed 5 years by the Board, or by a person or agency designated by the Board to perform such review, and the results shall be reported to the Secretary along with any recommendations by the Board regarding whether the delineation of the areas and the area distribution of the Board should continue without any change, or whether changes should be made in either the areas or the number of Board members to be appointed from each area, providing that each area shall be represented by not less than one Board member and any action recommended shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary.

[40 FR 59190, Dec. 22, 1975, as amended at 60 FR 66861, Dec. 27, 1995]

§1250.329 Selection.

From the nominations made pursuant to §1250.328, the Secretary shall appoint the members of the Board, and an alternate for each such member, on the basis of representations provided for in §1250.326, §1250.327, and §1250.328.

§1250.330 Acceptance.

Any person appointed by the Secretary as a member, or as an alternate member, of the Board shall qualify by filing a written acceptance with the Secretary within a period of time prescribed by the Secretary.

§1250.331 Vacancies.

To fill any vacancy occasioned by the failure to qualify of any person appointed as a member, or as an alternate member, of the Board, or in the event of the death, removal, resignation, or disqualification of any member or alternate member of the Board, a successor for the unexpired term of such member or alternate member of the Board shall be nominated, qualified, and appointed in the manner specified in §1250.326, §1250.328(b), §1250.329, and §1250.330, except that replacement of a Board member, or alternate, with an unexpired term of less than 6 months is not necessary.

§1250.332 Alternate members.

An alternate member of the Board, during the absence of the member for whom he is the alternate, shall act in the place and stead of such member and perform such other duties as assigned. In the event of the death, removal, resignation, or disqualification of a member, his alternate shall act for him until a successor for such member is appointed and qualified.

§1250.333 Procedure.

(a) A majority of the members, including alternates acting for members of the Board, shall constitute a quorum, and any action of the Board shall require the concurring votes of at least a majority of those present and voting. At assembled meetings, all votes shall be cast in person.

(b) For routine and noncontroversial matters which do not require deliberation and exchange of views, and in matters of an emergency nature when there is not enough time to call an assembled meeting of the Board, the Board may also take action upon the concurring votes of a majority of its

members by mail, telephone, or telegraph, but any such action by telephone shall be confirmed promptly in writing.

§1250.334 Compensation and reimbursement.

The members of the Board, and alternates when acting as members, shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable expenses, as approved by the Board, incurred by them in the performance of their duties under this subpart.

§1250.335 Powers of the Board.

The Board shall have the following powers:

- (a) To administer the provisions of this subpart in accordance with its terms and provisions;
- (b) To make rules and regulations to effectuate the terms and provisions of this subpart;
- (c) To receive, investigate, and report to the Secretary complaints of violations of this subpart; and
- (d) To recommend to the Secretary amendments to this subpart.

§1250.336 Duties.

The Board shall have the following duties:

- (a) To meet and organize and to select from among its members a chairman and such other officers as may be necessary, to select committees and subcommittees of Board members, to adopt such rules for the conduct of its business as it may deem advisable, and it may establish advisory committees of persons other than Board members;
- (b) To appoint or employ such persons as it may deem necessary and to define the duties and determine the compensation of each;
- (c) To prepare and submit to the Secretary for his approval budgets on a fiscal-period basis of its anticipated expenses and disbursements in the administration of this subpart, including probable cost of plans and projects as estimated in the budget or budgets submitted to it by prospective contractors, with the Board's recommendations with respect thereto. In preparing a budget for each of the 1994 and subsequent fiscal years, the Board shall, to the maximum extent practicable, allocate a proportion of funds for research projects comparable to the proportion of funds allocated for research projects in the Board's fiscal year 1993 budget.
- (d) With the approval of the Secretary, to enter into contracts or agreements with persons, including, but not limited to, State, regional, or national agencies or State, regional, or national egg organizations which administer research, education, or promotion programs, advertising agencies, public relations firms, public or private research organizations, advertising and promotion media, and egg producer organizations, for the development and submission to it of plans and projects authorized by §1250.341 and for the carrying out of such plans or projects when approved by the Secretary, and for the payment of the cost thereof with funds collected pursuant to §1250.347. Any such contracts or agreements shall provide that such contractors shall develop and submit to the Board a plan or project together with a budget or budgets which shall show estimated costs to be incurred for such plan or project, and that any such plan or project shall become effective upon approval by the Secretary. Any such contract or agreement shall also provide that the contractor shall keep accurate records of all of its transactions and

make periodic reports to the Board of activities carried out and an accounting for funds received and expended, and such other reports as the Secretary may require;

(e) To review and submit to the Secretary any plans or projects which have been developed and submitted to it by the prospective contractor, together with its recommendations with respect to the approval thereof by the Secretary;

(f) To maintain such books and records and prepare and submit such reports from time to time to the Secretary as he may prescribe, and to make appropriate accounting with respect to the receipt and disbursement of all funds entrusted to it;

(g)-(h) [Reserved]

(i) To prepare and make public, at least annually, a report of activities carried out and an accounting for funds received and expended;

(j) To cause its books to be audited by a certified public accountant at least once each fiscal period and at such other times as the Secretary may request, and submit a copy of each such audit to the Secretary;

(k) To give the Secretary the same notice of meetings of the Board as is given to members in order that he or his representative may attend such meetings;

(l) To act as an intermediary between the Secretary and any producer or handler; and

(m) To submit to the Secretary such information pursuant to this subpart as he may request.

[40 FR 59190, Dec. 22, 1975, as amended at 54 FR 99, Jan. 4, 1989, and 54 FR 11493, Mar. 21, 1989; 54 FR 12310, Mar. 24, 1989; 59 FR 38876, Aug. 1, 1994; 60 FR 66861, Dec. 27, 1995]

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND PROMOTION

§1250.341 Research, education, and promotion.

The Board shall develop and submit to the Secretary for approval any programs or projects authorized in this section. Such programs or projects shall provide for:

(a) The establishment, issuance, effectuation, and administration of appropriate programs or projects for advertising, sales promotion, and consumer education with respect to the use of eggs, egg products, spent fowl, and products of spent fowl: *Provided, however,* That any such program or project shall be directed towards increasing the general demand for eggs, egg products, spent fowl, or products of spent fowl;

(b) The establishment and carrying on of research, marketing, and development projects and studies with respect to sale, distribution, marketing, utilization, or production of eggs, egg products, spent fowl, and products of spent fowl, and the creation of new products thereof in accordance with section 7(b) of the act, to the end that the marketing and utilization of eggs, egg products, spent fowl, and products of spent fowl may be encouraged, expanded, improved, or made more acceptable, and the data collected by such activities may be disseminated;

(c) The development and expansion of foreign markets and uses for eggs, egg products, spent fowl, and products of spent fowl;

(d) Each program or project authorized under paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this section shall be periodically reviewed or evaluated by the Board to insure that each such program or project contributes to a coordinated national program of research, education, and promotion contributing to the maintenance of markets and for the development of new markets for and of new products from eggs, egg products, spent fowl, and products of spent fowl. If it is found by the Board that any such program or project does not further the national purpose of the act, then the Board shall terminate such program or project; and

(e) No advertising or promotion programs shall use false or unwarranted claims or make any reference to private brand names of eggs, egg products, spent fowl, and products of spent fowl or use unfair or deceptive acts or practices with respect to quality, value, or use of any competing product.

EXPENSES AND ASSESSMENTS

§1250.346 Expenses.

The Board is authorized to incur such expenses as the Secretary finds are reasonable and likely to be incurred by the Board for its maintenance and functioning and to enable it to exercise its powers and perform its duties in accordance with the provisions of this subpart. The total costs incurred by the Board for a fiscal period in collecting producer assessments and having an administrative staff shall not exceed an amount of the projected total assessments to be collected by the Board for such fiscal period that the Secretary determines to be reasonable. The funds to cover such expenses shall be paid from assessments received pursuant to §1250.347.

[40 FR 59190, Dec. 22, 1975, as amended at 54 FR 100, Jan. 4, 1989, and 54 FR 11493, Mar. 21, 1989]

§1250.347 Assessments.

Each handler designated in §1250.349 and pursuant to regulations issued by the Board shall collect from each producer, except for those producers specifically exempted in §1250.348, and shall pay to the Board at such times and in such manner as prescribed by regulations issued by the Board an assessment at a rate not to exceed 10 cents per 30-dozen case of eggs, or the equivalent thereof, for such expenses and expenditures, including provisions for a reasonable reserve and those administrative costs incurred by the Department of Agriculture after this subpart is effective, as the Secretary finds are reasonable and likely to be incurred by the Board and the Secretary under this subpart, except that no more than one such assessment shall be made on any case of eggs.

[59 FR 64560, Dec. 15, 1994]

§1250.348 Exemptions.

The following shall be exempt from the specific provisions of the Act:

(a) Any egg producer whose aggregate number of laying hens at any time during a 3-consecutive-month period immediately prior to the date assessments are due and payable has not exceeded 75,000 laying hens. The aggregate number of laying hens owned by a trust or similar entity shall be considered ownership by the beneficiaries of the trust or other entity. Ownership of laying hens by an egg producer also shall include the following:

(1) In cases in which the producer is an individual, laying hens owned by such producer or members of such producer's family that are effectively under the control of such producer, as determined by the Secretary;

(2) In cases in which the producer is a general partnership or similar entity, laying hens owned by the entity and all partners or equity participants in the entity; and

(3) In cases in which the producer holds 50 percent or more of the stock or other beneficial interest in a corporation, joint stock company, association, cooperative, limited partnership, or other similar entity, laying hens owned by the entity. Stock or other beneficial interest in an entity that is held by the following shall be considered as held by the producer:

(i) Members of the producer's family described in paragraph (a)(1);

(ii) A general partnership or similar entity in which the producer is a partner or equity participant;

(iii) The partners or equity participants in an entity of the type described in (a)(3)(ii); or

(iv) A corporation, joint stock company, association, cooperative, limited partnership, or other similar entity in which the producer holds 50 percent or more of the stock or other beneficial interests.

(b) Any egg producer owning a flock of breeding hens whose production of eggs is primarily utilized for the hatching of baby chicks.

(c) In order to qualify for exemption from the provisions of the Act under this section, producers claiming such exemption must comply with §1250.530 regarding certification of exempt producers and other such regulations as may be prescribed by the Secretary as a condition to exemption from the provisions of the Act under this section.

[55 FR 6973, Feb. 28, 1990, as amended at 59 FR 38876, Aug. 1, 1994]

§1250.349 Collecting handlers and collection.

(a) Handlers responsible for collecting the assessment specified in §1250.347 shall be any one of the following:

(1) The first person to whom eggs are sold, consigned, or delivered by producers and who grades, cartons, breaks, or otherwise performs a function of a handler under §1250.309,

(2) A producer who grades, cartons, breaks, or otherwise performs a function of a handler under §1250.309 for eggs of his own production, or

(3) Such other persons as designated by the Board under rules and regulations issued pursuant to this subpart.

(b) Handlers shall collect and remit to the Egg Board all assessments collected in the manner and in the time specified by the Board pursuant to rules and regulations issued by the Board.

(c) Handlers shall maintain such records as the Egg Board may prescribe pursuant to rules and regulations issued by the Board.

(d) The Board with the approval of the Secretary may authorize other organizations or agencies to collect assessments in its behalf.

[40 FR 59190, Dec. 22, 1975. Redesignated at 55 FR 6973, Feb. 28, 1990]

§1250.350 [Reserved]

§1250.351 Influencing governmental action.

No funds collected by the Board under this subpart shall in any manner be used for the purpose of influencing governmental policy or action except to recommend to the Secretary amendments to this subpart.

[40 FR 59190, Dec. 22, 1975. Redesignated at 55 FR 6973, Feb. 28, 1990]

REPORTS, BOOKS, AND RECORDS

§1250.352 Reports.

Each handler subject to this subpart and other persons subject to section 7(c) of the act may be required to report to the Board periodically such information as is required by regulations and will effectuate the purposes of the act, which information may include but not be limited to the following:

- (a) Number of cases of eggs handled;
- (b) Number of cases of eggs on which an assessment was collected;
- (c) Name and address of person from whom any assessment was collected; and
- (d) Date collection of assessment was made on each case of eggs handled.

[40 FR 59190, Dec. 22, 1975. Redesignated at 55 FR 6973, Feb. 28, 1990]

§1250.353 Books and records.

Each handler subject to this subpart and persons subject to section 7(c) of the act shall maintain and make available for inspection by the Board or the Secretary such books and records as are necessary to carry out the provisions of the subpart and the regulations issued hereunder, including such records as are necessary to verify any reports required. Such records shall be retained for at least 2 years beyond the fiscal period of their applicability.

[40 FR 59190, Dec. 22, 1975. Redesignated at 55 FR 6973, Feb. 28, 1990]

§1250.354 Confidential treatment.

(a) All information obtained from such books, records, or reports shall be kept confidential by all officers and employees of the Department of Agriculture and 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 upon the request of the Secretary, or to which the Secretary or any officer of the United States is a party and involving this subpart. Nothing in this paragraph shall be deemed to prohibit (1) the issuance of general statements based upon the reports of the number of persons subject to this subpart or statistical data collected therefrom, which statements do not identify the information furnished by any person, (2) the publication, by direction of the Secretary, of general statements relating to refunds made by the Egg Board during any specific period of time, or (3) the publication, by direction of the Secretary, of the name of any person violating this subpart together with a statement of the particular provisions of this subpart violated by such person.

(b) All information with respect to refunds, except as provided in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, made to individual producers shall be kept confidential by all officers and employees of the Department of Agriculture and the Board.

[40 FR 59190, Dec. 22, 1975. Redesignated at 55 FR 6973, Feb. 28, 1990]

CERTIFICATION OF ORGANIZATIONS

§1250.356 Certification of organizations.

Any organization may request the Secretary for certification of eligibility to participate in nominating members and alternate members on the Board to represent the geographic area in which the organization represents egg producers. Such eligibility shall be based in addition to other available information upon a factual report submitted by the organization which shall contain information deemed relevant and specified by the Secretary for the making of such determination, including, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) Geographic territory covered by the organization's active membership;
- (b) Nature and size of the organization's active membership, proportion of total of such active membership accounted for by producers of commercial eggs, a chart showing the egg production by State in which the organization has members, and the volume of commercial eggs produced by the organization's active membership in such State(s);
- (c) The extent to which the commercial egg producer membership of such organization is represented in setting the organization's policies;
- (d) Evidence of stability and permanency of the organization;
- (e) Sources from which the organization's operating funds are derived;
- (f) Functions of the organization; and
- (g) The organization's ability and willingness to further the aims and objectives of the act.

The primary consideration in determining the eligibility of an organization shall be whether its egg producer membership consists of a substantial number of egg producers who produce a substantial volume of the applicable geographic area's commercial eggs to reasonably warrant its participation in the nomination of members for the Board or to request the issuance of an order. The Secretary shall certify any organization which he finds to be eligible under this section and his determination as to eligibility shall be final.

MISCELLANEOUS

§1250.357 Suspension and termination.

- (a) The Secretary shall, whenever he finds that this subpart or any provision thereof obstructs or does not tend to effectuate the declared policy of the act, terminate or suspend the operation of this subpart or such provision.

(b) The Secretary may conduct a referendum at any time, and shall hold a referendum on request of 10 percent or more of the number of egg producers voting in the referendum approving this subpart, to determine whether egg producers favor the termination or suspension of this subpart, and the Secretary shall suspend or terminate such subpart at the end of 6 months after he determines that suspension or termination of the subpart is approved or favored by a majority of the egg producers voting in such referendum who, during a representative period determined by the Secretary, have been engaged in the production of commercial eggs, and who produced more than 50 percent of the volume of eggs produced by the egg producers voting in the referendum.

§1250.358 Proceedings after termination.

(a) Upon the termination of this subpart the Board shall recommend not more than six of its members to the Secretary to serve as trustees for the purpose of liquidating the affairs of the Board. Such persons, upon designation by the Secretary, shall become trustees of all the funds and property then in the possession or under control of the Board, including claims for any funds unpaid or property not delivered or any other claim existing at the time of such termination.

(b) The said trustees shall: (1) Continue in such capacity until discharged by the Secretary, (2) carry out the obligations of the Board under any contracts or agreements entered into by it pursuant to §1250.336, (3) from time to time account for all receipts and disbursements and deliver all property on hand, together with all books and records of the Board and of the trustees, to such person as the Secretary may direct, and (4) upon the request of the Secretary, execute such assignments or other instruments necessary or appropriate to vest in such person full title and right to all of the funds, property, and claims vested in the Board or the trustees pursuant to this subpart.

(c) Any person to whom funds, property, or claims have been transferred or delivered pursuant to this subpart shall be subject to the same obligation imposed upon the Board and upon the trustees.

(d) Any residual funds not required to defray the necessary expenses of liquidation shall be turned over to the Secretary to be disposed of, to the extent practicable, in the interest of continuing one or more of the research or promotion programs hitherto authorized.

§1250.359 Effect of termination or amendment.

Unless otherwise expressly provided by the Secretary, the termination of this subpart or of any regulation issued pursuant hereto, or the issuance of any amendment to either thereof, shall not:

(a) Affect or waive any right, duty, obligation, or liability which shall have arisen or which may hereafter arise in connection with any provision of this subpart or any regulation issued thereunder;

(b) Release or extinguish any violation of this subpart or any regulation issued hereunder; or

(c) Affect or impair any rights or remedies of the United States, or of the Secretary, or of any person, with respect to any such violation.

§1250.360 [Reserved]

§1250.361 Right of the Secretary.

All fiscal matters, programs or projects, rules or regulations, reports, or other substantive action proposed and prepared by the Board shall be submitted to the Secretary for his approval.

§1250.362 Amendments.

Amendments to this subpart may be proposed, from time to time, by the Board, or by an organization certified pursuant to section 16 of the act, or by any interested person affected by the provisions of the act, including the Secretary.

§1250.363 Separability.

If any provision of this subpart is declared invalid or the applicability thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the validity of the remainder of this subpart of the applicability thereof to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

Subpart—Rules and Regulations

SOURCE: 41 FR 22925, June 8, 1976, unless otherwise noted.

DEFINITIONS

§1250.500 Terms defined.

Unless otherwise defined in this subpart, definitions of terms used in this subpart shall be those definitions of terms defined in the Egg Research and Consumer Information Act, hereinafter called the Act, and the Egg Research and Promotion Order, hereinafter called the Order.

(a) *Act*. “Act” means the Egg Research and Consumer Information Act as it may be amended (Pub. L. 93-428).

(b) *Secretary*. “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture or any other officer or employee of the Department of Agriculture to whom there has heretofore been delegated, or to whom there may hereafter be delegated, the authority to act in his stead.

(c) *Egg Board or Board*. “Egg Board” or “Board” or other designatory term adopted by such Board, with the approval of the Secretary, means the administrative body established pursuant to §1250.326.

(d) *Fiscal period*. “Fiscal period” means the calendar year unless the Egg Board, with the approval of the Secretary, selects some other budgetary period.

(e) *Egg producer or producer*. “Egg producer” or “producer” means any person who either:

(1) Is an egg farmer who acquires and owns laying hens, chicks, and/or started pullets for the purpose of and is engaged in the production of commercial eggs; or

(2) Is a person who supplied or supplies laying hens, chicks, and/or started pullets to an egg farmer for the purpose of producing commercial eggs pursuant to an oral or written contractual agreement for the production of commercial eggs. Such person is deemed to be the owner of such laying hens unless it is established in writing, to the satisfaction of the Secretary or the Egg Board, that actual ownership of the laying hens is in some other party to the contract. In the event the party to an oral contract who supplied or supplies the laying hens cannot be readily identified by the Secretary or the Egg Board, the person who has immediate possession and control over the laying hens at the egg production facility shall be deemed to be the owner of such hens unless written notice is provided to the Secretary or the Egg Board, signed by the parties to said oral contract, clearly stating that the eggs are being produced under a contractual agreement and identifying the party (or parties) under said contract who is the owner of the hens.

(f) *Commercial eggs or eggs.* “Commercial eggs” or “eggs” means eggs from domesticated chickens which are sold for human consumption either in shell egg form or for further processing into egg products.

(g) *Person.* “Person” means any individual, group of individuals, partnership, corporation, association, cooperative, or any other entity.

(h) *Handle.* “Handle” means to grade, carton, process, transport, purchase, or in any way place eggs or cause eggs to be placed in the current of commerce. Such term shall not include the washing, the packing in cases, or the delivery by the producer of his own nest run eggs.

(i) *Handler.* “Handler” means any person who receives or otherwise acquires eggs from an egg producer, and processes, prepares for marketing, or markets such eggs, including eggs of his own production.

(j) *Egg products.* “Egg products” means products produced, in whole or in part, from eggs.

(k) *Cooperating agency.* “Cooperating agency” means any person with which the Egg Board has entered into an agreement pursuant to §1250.517(c).

(l) *Case.* “Case” means the standard shipping package containing 30-dozen eggs or the equivalent thereof.

(m) *Plans and projects.* “Plans” and “projects” mean those research, consumer and producer education, advertising, marketing, product development, and promotion plans, studies, or projects pursuant to §1250.341.

(n) *Representative of a producer.* “Representative of a producer” means the owner, officer, or an employee of a producer who has been duly authorized to act in the place and stead of the producer.

(o) *Hen or laying hen.* “Hen” or “laying hen” means a domesticated female chicken 20 weeks of age or over, raised primarily for the production of commercial eggs.

(p) *Hatching eggs.* “Hatching eggs” means eggs intended for use by hatcheries for the production of baby chicks.

(q) *United States.* “United States” means the 48 contiguous States of the United States of America and the District of Columbia.

(r) *Promotion.* “Promotion” means any action, including paid advertising, to advance the image or desirability of eggs, egg products, spent fowl, or products of spent fowl.

(s) *Research.* “Research” means any type of research to advance the image, desirability, marketability, production, or quality of eggs, egg products, spent fowl, or products of spent fowl, or the evaluation of such research.

(t) *Consumer education.* “Consumer education” means any action to advance the image or desirability of eggs, egg products, spent fowl, or products of spent fowl.

(u) *Marketing.* “Marketing” means the sale or other disposition of commercial eggs, egg products, spent fowl, or products of spent fowl, in any channel of commerce.

(v) *Commerce.* “Commerce” means interstate, foreign, or intrastate commerce.

(w) *Spent fowl*. "Spent fowl" means hens which have been in production of commercial eggs and have been removed from such production for slaughter.

(x) *Products of spent fowl*. "Products of spent fowl" means commercial products produced from spent fowl.

(y) *Started pullet*. "Started pullet" means a hen less than 20 weeks of age.

(z) *Shell egg packer*. "Shell egg packer" means any person grading eggs into their various qualities.

(aa) *Egg breaker*. "Egg breaker" means any person subject to the Egg Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 1031 *et seq.*) engaged in the breaking of shell eggs or otherwise involved in preparing shell eggs for use as egg products.

(bb) *Nest run eggs*. "Nest run eggs" means eggs which are packed as they come from the production facilities without having been sized and/or candled with the exception that some checks, dirties, or obvious undergrades may have been removed and provided further that the eggs may have been washed.

OMB CONTROL NUMBERS ASSIGNED PURSUANT TO THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT

§1250.501 OMB control numbers assigned pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act.

(a) *Purpose*. This section collects and displays the control numbers assigned to information collection requirements by the Office of Management and Budget contained in 7 CFR part 1250 pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, Pub. L. 96-511.

(b) *Display*.

7 CFR section where identified and described	Current OMB control number
Sec.:	
1250.523	0581-0098
1250.528	0581-0098
1250.529	0581-0098
1250.530	0581-0098
1250.535	0581-0098

(Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627) and Egg Research and Consumer Information Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2701-2718))

[48 FR 56566, Dec. 22, 1983]

GENERAL

§1250.505 Communications.

Communications in connection with the Order shall be addressed to the Egg Board at its business address.

§1250.506 Policy and objective.

(a) It shall be the policy of the Egg Board to carry out an effective and continuous coordinated program of research, consumer and producer education, advertising, and promotion designed to strengthen the egg industry's position in the marketplace, and maintain and expand domestic and foreign markets and uses for eggs, egg products, spent fowl, and products of spent fowl of the United States.

(b) It shall be the objective of the Egg Board to carry out programs and projects which will provide maximum benefit to the egg industry and no undue preference shall be given to any of the various industry segments.

§1250.507 Contracts.

The Egg Board, with the approval of the Secretary, may enter into contracts with persons for the development and submission to it of plans or projects authorized by the Order and for carrying out of such plans or projects. Contractors shall agree to comply with the provisions of the Order, this subpart, and applicable provisions of the U.S. Code relative to contracting with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Subcontractors who enter into contracts or agreements with a primary contractor and who receive or otherwise utilize funds allocated by the Egg Board shall be subject to the provisions of this subpart.

§1250.508 Procedure.

The organization of the Egg Board and the procedure for conducting meetings of the Board shall be in accordance with the By-Laws of the Board.

§1250.509 USDA costs.

Pursuant to §1250.347 of the Order, the Board shall pay those administrative costs incurred by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the conduct of its duties under the Order as determined periodically by the Secretary. Payment shall be due promptly after the billing for such costs.

§1250.510 Determination of Board Membership.

(a) Pursuant to §1250.328 (d) and (e) of the Order, the 48 contiguous States of the United States shall be grouped into 6 geographic areas, as follows: Area 1 (North Atlantic States)—Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia; Area 2 (South Atlantic States)—Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina; Area 3 (East North Central States)—Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee; Area 4 (West North Central States)—Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Wyoming; Area 5 (South Central States)—Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska; Area 6 (Western States)—Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, and Washington.

(b) Board representation among the 6 geographic areas is apportioned to reflect the percentages of United States egg production in each area times 18 (total Board membership). The distribution of members of the Board is:

Area 1-3, Area 2-3, Area 3-3, Area 4-3, Area 5-3, and Area 6-3. Each member will have an alternate appointed from the same area.

[71 FR 41727, July 24, 2006]

ASSESSMENTS, COLLECTIONS, AND REMITTANCES

§1250.514 Levy of assessments.

An assessment rate of 10 cents per case of commercial eggs is levied on each case of commercial eggs handled for the account of each producer. Each case of commercial eggs shall be subject to assessment only once. Producers meeting the requirements of §1250.348 are exempt from the provisions of the Act including this section.

[55 FR 6974, Feb. 28, 1990, as amended at 59 FR 64560, Dec. 15, 1994]

§1250.515 Reporting period and payment.

(a) For the purpose of the payment of assessments, either a calendar month or a 4-week accounting period shall be considered the reporting period; however, other accounting periods may be used when approved by the Board on an individual basis. Each collecting handler shall register his reporting period with the Board. All changes in reporting periods shall be requested in writing and subject to approval by the Board.

(b) Each producer shall pay the required assessment on his commercial eggs pursuant to §1250.514 to the collecting handler designated in §1250.516 on or before the date of final settlement between the producer and the collecting handler for the eggs received by the collecting handler during each reporting period.

§1250.516 Collecting handlers and collection.

(a) Handlers responsible for collecting the assessments shall be any of the following:

(1) The first person to whom eggs are sold, consigned, or delivered by producers and who grades, cartons, or breaks such eggs. Such shell egg breaker or egg packer must collect and remit to the Board the assessments on all eggs handled except eggs for which there is a certification of exemption or eggs for which there is a statement indicating that an assessment has already been paid;

(2) A person who buys or receives nest run eggs from a producer and who does not grade, carton, or break such eggs. Such person shall collect the assessment from the producer and remit to the Egg Board on all such eggs, except for which there is a certification of exemption or eggs for which there is a statement indicating that an assessment has already been paid;

(3) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (a)(4) of this section, a producer who grades, cartons, or breaks eggs of his own production shall be responsible for remitting the assessment to the Board on all eggs produced. This would include the eggs which he grades, cartons, or breaks as well as the nest run eggs which are graded, cartoned, or broken by another handler. Such a producer who remits the assessment on nest run eggs to the Board shall provide the handler specified in paragraph (a) (1) or (2) of this section with a written statement that the assessment has already been paid on the nest run eggs; or

(4) Upon approval of the Board, any person who handles eggs for a producer under a written contract that includes express provisions that said handler will remit the assessment on such eggs to the Board shall be the collecting handler notwithstanding the fact that the producer may have graded, cartoned, or otherwise processed the eggs.

Following are some examples to aid in identification of collecting handlers:

(i) Producer sells, assigns, consigns, or otherwise delivers nest run eggs of his own production to a shell egg packer or breaker for preparation for market—the shell egg packer or breaker is the collecting handler and is responsible for remitting to the Egg Board;

(ii) Producer grades, cartons, breaks, or otherwise prepares for marketing a portion of the eggs of his own production and delivers the remaining portion of his nest run eggs to a shell egg packer or breaker—the producer is the collecting handler and shall remit the assessment on his total production to the Board;

(iii) Producer sells all or a portion of his eggs in nest run form to a handler who is not a shell egg packer or breaker—the handler is responsible for collecting the assessment and remitting it to the Egg Board except for eggs covered by a statement indicating that an assessment has already been paid;

(iv) A shell egg packer or breaker who buys or receives nest run eggs from a handler who is not a shell egg packer or breaker—the handler is the collecting handler and shall remit such assessment to the Board;

(v) A shell egg packer or egg breaker buys nest run or graded eggs including undergrade eggs from another shell egg packer or egg breaker—the first shell egg packer or breaker is the collecting handler and shall remit such assessments to the Board.

(b) In the event of a producer's death, bankruptcy, receivership, or incapacity to act, the representative of the producer or his estate, or the person acting on behalf of creditors, shall be considered the producer of the eggs for the purpose of this subpart.

(c) The collecting handler may collect the assessment directly from the producer or deduct the assessment from the proceeds due or paid to the producer on whose eggs the assessment is made.

[41 FR 22925, June 8, 1976, as amended at 42 FR 60724, Nov. 29, 1977]

§1250.517 Remittance to Egg Board.

(a) The collecting handler responsible for remittance of assessments to the Board is not relieved of this obligation as a result of his failure to collect payment of the assessment from the egg producer(s).

(b) Each collecting handler required to remit the assessments on the eggs handled during each reporting period, specified in §1250.515(a), shall remit the assessments directly to the Egg Board by check, draft, or money order payable to the Egg Board on or before the 15th day after the end of said reporting period together with a report pursuant to §1250.529. The assessment for each reporting period shall be calculated on the basis of the gross volume of eggs subject to assessment received by the collecting handler during each reporting period.

(c) Remittance through cooperating agency.

(1) In any State or specified geographic area the Egg Board, with the approval of the Secretary, may designate by agreement a cooperating agency to collect the assessments in its behalf. Every collecting handler within such a State or geographic area shall remit the assessments for each reporting period, specified in §1250.515(a), to the designated cooperating agency by check, draft, or money order payable to said cooperating agency on or before the 15th day after the end of said reporting period together with a report pursuant to §1250.529.

(2) On or before the 20th day after the end of each reporting period, each designated cooperating agency shall remit to the Egg Board the total amount of all assessments received from collecting handlers for said reporting period together with all collecting handler reports. In addition, each designated cooperating agency shall submit to the Egg Board such information as is required by the designation agreement with the Egg Board.

§1250.518 Receipts for payment of assessments.

(a) Each collecting handler shall give each producer whose eggs are subject to assessment a receipt for the commercial eggs handled by said collecting handler showing payment of the assessment. This receipt may be on a separate receipt form or included as part of the invoice or settlement sheet for the eggs, but in either event shall contain the following information:

(1) Name, address, and identification number of the collecting handler;

(2) Name and address of the producer who paid the assessment;

(3) Number of cases of eggs on which assessment was paid and the total amount of the assessment; and

(4) Date on which assessment was paid by producer.

(b) All eggs sold, consigned, or delivered from a collecting handler to another handler, excluding cartoned eggs and loose graded eggs sold to the bakeries, restaurants, and institutions, shall be accompanied with the collecting handler's written statement that the assessment on the lot of eggs covered by the invoice has been paid or that lot of eggs or portion thereof is exempt from assessment under provisions of §1250.514.

§1250.519 Late-payment charge.

Any unpaid assessments due to the Board pursuant to §1250.347 shall be increased by a late-payment charge of 1.5 percent each month beginning with the day following the date such assessments are 30 days past due. Any remaining amount due, which shall include any unpaid charges previously made pursuant to this section, shall be increased at the same rate on the corresponding day of each month thereafter until paid. Assessments that are not paid when due because of a person's failure to submit a handler report to the Board as required shall accrue late-payment charges from the time such assessments should have been remitted. The timeliness of a payment to the Board shall be based on the applicable postmark date or the date payment is actually received by the Board, whichever is earlier.

REGISTRATION, CERTIFICATION AND REPORTS

§1250.528 Registration of collecting handlers.

All collecting handlers shall, prior to August 1, 1976, register with the Egg Board by filing a registration statement. Registered collecting handlers will receive an identification number which must appear on all required reports and official communications with the Egg Board. New businesses subject to this subpart beginning after August 1, 1976, shall register with the Egg Board within 30 days following the beginning of operations. The statement of registration shall include:

- (a) Name and complete address of the collecting handler;
- (b) Name of individual(s) responsible for filing reports with the Egg Board; and
- (c) Type of reporting period desired.

§1250.529 Reports.

(a) *Collecting handler reports.* (1) Each collecting handler shall make reports on forms made available or approved by the Egg Board. Each collecting handler shall prepare a separate report form each reporting period. Each report shall be mailed to the Egg Board within 15 days after the close of the reporting period and shall contain the following information:

- (i) Date of report;
- (ii) Reporting period covered by the report;
- (iii) Name and address of collecting handler and identification number;
- (iv) Total number of cases of eggs handled, total number of cases of eggs subject to collection of assessment, total number of cases of eggs exempt under §1250.514 from collection of assessment, total number of cases of imported eggs handled, and total number of cases of eggs received from another handler and on which an assessment was already collected;
- (v) The names and addresses of producers subject to assessment supplying eggs to the handlers and number of cases of eggs received from each producer;
- (vi) Total amount of assessment due for eggs handled during the reporting period and remitted with the report; and
- (vii) Such other information as may be required by the Board.

(2) Collecting handler reports shall be filed each reporting period following registration until such time as the Egg Board is notified in writing that the collecting handler has ceased to do business. During reporting periods in which the collecting handler does not handle any eggs, his report form shall state "No Eggs Handled."

(b) The Egg Board may require all persons subject to section 7(c) of the Act to make reports as needed for the enforcement and administration of the Order and as approved by the Secretary.

§1250.530 Certification of exempt producers.

(a) *Number of laying hens.* Egg producers not subject to the provisions of the Act pursuant to §1250.348 shall file with all handlers to whom they sell eggs a statement certifying their exemption from the provisions of the Act in accordance with the criterion of §1250.348. Certification shall be made on forms approved and provided by the Egg Board to collecting handlers for use by exempt producers. The certification form shall be filed with each handler on or before January 1 of each year as long as the producer continues to do business with the handler. A copy of the certificate of exemption shall be forwarded to the Egg Board by the handler within 30 days of receipt. The certification shall list the following: the name and address of the producer, the basis for producer exemption according to the requirements of §1250.348, and the signature of the producer.

(b) *Organic Production.* (1) A producer who operates under an approved National Organic Program (7 CFR part 205) (NOP) organic production system plan may be exempt from the payment of assessments under this part, provided that:

(i) Only agricultural products certified as “organic” or “100 percent organic” (as defined in the NOP) are eligible for exemption;

(ii) The exemption shall apply to all certified “organic” or “100 percent organic” (as defined in the NOP) products of a producer regardless of whether the agricultural commodity subject to the exemption is produced by a person that also produces conventional or nonorganic agricultural products of the same agricultural commodity as that for which the exemption is claimed;

(iii) The producer maintains a valid certificate of organic operation as issued under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6501-6522)(OFPA) and the NOP regulations issued under OFPA (7 CFR part 205); and

(iv) Any producer so exempted shall continue to be obligated to pay assessments under this part that are associated with any agricultural products that do not qualify for an exemption under this section.

(2) To apply for exemption under this section, a producer shall submit a request to the Board on an *Organic Exemption Request Form* (Form AMS-15) at any time during the year initially, and annually thereafter on or before January 1, for as long the producer continues to be eligible for the exemption.

(3) A producer request for exemption shall include the following:

(i) The applicant's full name, company name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address;

(ii) Certification that the applicant maintains a valid certificate of organic operation issued under the OFPA and the NOP;

(iii) Certification that the applicant produces organic products eligible to be labeled “organic” or “100 percent organic” under the NOP;

(iv) A requirement that the applicant attach a copy of their certificate of organic operation issued by a USDA-accredited certifying agent under the OFPA and the NOP;

(v) Certification, as evidenced by signature and date, that all information provided by the applicant is true; and

(vi) Such other information as may be required by the Board, with the approval of the Secretary.

(4) If a producer complies with the requirements of this section, the Board will grant an assessment exemption and issue a Certificate of Exemption to the producer within 30 days. If the application is disapproved, the Board will notify the applicant of the reason(s) for disapproval within the same timeframe.

(5) The producer shall provide a copy of the Certificate of Exemption to each handler to whom the producer sells eggs. The handler shall maintain records showing the exempt producer's name and address and the exemption number assigned by the Board.

(6) The exemption will apply at the first reporting period following the issuance of the Certificate of Exemption.

(c) If the exempt producer no longer qualifies for an exemption as specified in §1250.348 or 1250.530(b), that producer shall notify, within 10 days, all handlers with whom the producer has filed a Certificate of Exemption.

[70 FR 2761, Jan. 14, 2005, as amended at 80 FR 82034, Dec. 31, 2015]

RECORDS

§1250.535 Retention of records.

(a) Each person required to make reports pursuant to this subpart shall maintain and retain for at least 2 years beyond the fiscal period of their applicability:

(1) One copy of each report submitted to the Egg Board;

(2) Records of all exempt producers including certification of exemption as necessary to verify the address of each exempt producer; and

(3) Such other records as are necessary to verify reports submitted to the Egg Board.

(b) Egg producers subject to §1250.514 shall maintain and retain for at least 2 years beyond the period of their applicability:

(1) Receipts, or copies thereof, for payment of assessments; and

(2) Such records as are necessary to verify monthly levels of egg production.

§1250.536 Availability of records.

Each handler and egg producer subject to this subpart and all persons subject to section 7(c) of the Act shall make available for inspection and copying by authorized employees of the Egg Board and/or the Secretary during regular business hours, such information as is appropriate and necessary to verify compliance with this subpart.

§1250.537 Confidentiality.

All information obtained by officers and employees of the Department of Agriculture, the Egg Board, or any person under contract by the Egg Board or otherwise acting on behalf of the Egg Board from the books, records, and reports of persons subject to this subpart, and all information with respect to refunds

of assessments made to individual producers, shall be kept confidential in the manner and to the extent provided in §1250.353 of the Order.

PATENTS, COPYRIGHTS, TRADEMARKS, AND INFORMATION

§1250.542 Patents, Copyrights, Inventions, Trademarks, Information, Publications, and Product Formulations.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, any patents, copyrights, inventions, trademarks, information, publications, or product formulations developed through the use of funds collected by the Board under the provisions of this subpart shall be the property of the U.S. Government, as represented by the Board, and shall, along with any rents, royalties, residual payments, or other income from the rental, sales, leasing, franchising, or other uses of such patents, copyrights, inventions, trademarks, information, publications, or product formulations, inure to the benefit of the Board; shall be considered income subject to the same fiscal, budget, and audit controls as other funds of the Board; and may be licensed subject to approval by the Secretary. Upon termination of this subpart, §1250.358 shall apply to determine disposition of all such property.

(b) Should patents, copyrights, inventions, trademarks, information, publications, or product formulations be developed through the use of funds collected by the Board under this subpart and funds contributed by another organization or person, the ownership and related rights to such patents, copyrights, inventions, trademarks, information, publications, or product formulations shall be determined by an agreement between the Board and the party contributing funds towards the development of such patents, copyrights, inventions, trademarks, information, publications, or product formulations in a manner consistent with paragraph (a) of this section.

[81 FR 90186, Dec. 14, 2016]

PERSONAL LIABILITY

§1250.547 Personal liability.

No member, alternate member, employee, or agent of the Board in the performance of his duties with the Board shall be held personally responsible either individually or jointly with others, in anyway whatsoever, to any person for errors in judgment, mistakes, or other acts, either of commission or omission, by such member, alternate member, employee, or agent, except for acts of dishonesty or willful misconduct.