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# News Releases and other News Material

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

Page



### NEWS RELEASES-



### PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS-

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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

# News Releases-

Release No. 0002.94
Jill Bauermeister (202) 205-1134
David Detar (301) 722-9807

**USDA FOREST SERVICE ANNOUNCES A NEW PHONE NUMBER FOR CAMPGROUND RESERVATION SERVICE**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3---Effective January 1, 1994 the number for reserving USDA Forest Service campground sites throughout America will be changed to 1-800-280-2267. For the hearing and speech impaired, the number will be TDD 1-800-879-4496. These numbers replace the campground reservation numbers used in previous years.

Both family and group reservations will be accepted for many of the campgrounds in the 156 national forests and grasslands which are located within the continental United States, Alaska, and Puerto Rico. The reservation center will be able to tell customers which campground in which states are available for advance reservations through this system. This system will allow visitors to plan ahead for their trips and make greater use of the national forests and grasslands campgrounds.

The National Forest Reservation Center operating hours are:

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| January through September | Monday - Friday | 9:00 am - 9:00 pm | EST |
| | Saturday & Sunday | 11:00 am - 7:00 pm | EST |
| October through December | Monday - Friday | 11:00 am - 7:00 pm | EST |

Fees for reserving campsites through this system are S7.50 per family for a site and S15.00 for a group site. There is a S7.50 cancellation fee for reservations made through this system.

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Release No. 0003.94
Ed Curlett (301) 436-7255
Ron Hall (202) 720-3310

**USDA PROPOSES PROGRAM THAT WOULD END QUARANTINE ON CANADIAN SEED POTATOES**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3--The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to put in place a seed potato certification program that could make a federal quarantine on Canadian seed potatoes unnecessary. Because of this proposed certification program, a quarantine which had been imposed to stop the spread of the necrotic strain of potato virus Y (PVYn) would no longer be necessary.

The Canadian seed potato certification program, which resulted from a recent agreement between the United States and Canada, is called the Canada/United States PVYn Management Plan.

"The implementation of this plan would protect U.S. agriculture from potential risks imposed by PVYn, making federal regulations that apply to Canada with respect to PVYn unnecessary with regard to protection of U.S. agriculture," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator for plant protection and quarantine with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The management plan calls for testing seed potatoes for PVYn in early generations and mandates the removal of infected seedlots from seed potato production.

Copies of the plan can be obtained by writing James Petit de Mange, operations officer, Port Operations Staff, PPQ, APHIS, USDA, Room 632, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Consideration will be given to comments received within 30 days of the proposed rule's publication in the Federal Register. The proposed rule was published in the Federal Register on Dec. 20.

An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 93-021-2 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804, Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be inspected at USDA, Room 1141 South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

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Release No. 0004.94
Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898
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**NEW MEXICO, MISSISSIPPI BEAT PSEUDORABIES; MORE STATES UPGRADE DISEASE STATUS**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3--New Mexico and Mississippi have successfully eradicated the livestock disease pseudorabies from all domestic swine herds, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

"We commend animal health officials and swine producers in Mississippi and New Mexico for their cooperative efforts to eradicate pseudorabies," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

New Mexico and Mississippi have joined Wyoming, New York, Connecticut, Alaska, Maine and Utah in achieving Stage V or "Free" status in the five-stage state-federal-industry cooperative pseudorabies eradication program.

Accepting recommendations of the National Pseudorabies Control Board, APHIS also advanced Nevada to Stage IV; advanced California and Vermont to Stage III; advanced 76 counties in the state of Nebraska to Stage III; advanced Maryland and the Virgin Islands to Stage II; and added 15 additional counties in Minnesota to Stage III.

Johnson said states participating in the eradication program advance from Stage I to Stage V. Stage I is preparation. Stage II is control. Stage III is mandatory clean-up of all pseudorabies-infected herds. Stage IV is surveillance to make sure no infection remains. Stage V, pseudorabies-free status, is achieved if a state in Stage IV goes for one year without finding an infected swine herd.

Pseudorabies is a viral disease most prevalent in swine, often causing newborn piglets to die. Older pigs can survive infection, becoming carriers of the pseudorabies virus for life. Other animals, such as cattle, sheep, dogs and cats, can become infected from swine. Cattle and sheep infected with pseudorabies may show signs known as "the mad itch" by scratching and biting themselves. In dogs and cats, pseudorabies can cause sudden death. The virus does not cause illness in humans.

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:** The status of the various states in the pseudorabies eradication program is as follows:

**Stage 1:** Florida, Iowa, New Jersey and Rhode Island.

**Stage 2:** Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

**Stage 2/3:** Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska and North Carolina.

**Stage 3:** Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

**Stage 4:** Arizona, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon and Washington.

**Stage 5:** Alaska, Connecticut, Maine, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, Utah and Wyoming.

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Release No. 0005.94
Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998
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**USDA SETS HEARING ON "CLASS II" MILK PRICING FORMULA**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3--The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold a public hearing on proposed changes in the formula used to calculate the price of milk used in "Class II" products for all federal milk marketing orders. These products include such items as cottage cheese, yogurt and ice cream.

The hearing will begin at 9 a.m., Jan 6, 1994, at the Ramada Hotel-Old Town, 901 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, Va. 22314; tel. (703) 683-6000.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said two milk processing trade associations and a federation representing a significant number of dairy farmers requested the changes.

According to the proponents of the change, the current Class II price formula results in widely fluctuating prices, which, they claim, interfere with the orderly marketing of Class II products. AMS's Dairy Division sets the prices for the milk orders as authorized by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937.

Class II prices are presently determined using a base price, updated to reflect recent changes in dairy product prices and adding a differential over the manufacturing price. At issue in the proposals is the amount of the differential and the updating procedure. Other proposals include a request that announcement of the Class II price be changed from the 15th of the month to the 5th, to coincide with the Class I and III price announcements.

Details of the proposals and of the hearing were published in the Dec. 21 Federal Register. Copies may be obtained from any federal milk marketing order office, or the Order Formulation Branch, Dairy Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2968-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 720-6274.

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Release No. 0006.94
Cynthia A. Eck (301) 436-5931
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**USDA TO RULE ON GENETICALLY ENGINEERED SOYBEANS**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is asking the public for comments on the Monsanto company's petition for a determination of nonregulated status for certain genetically engineered soybeans.

Monsanto Co., in Chesterfield, Mo., has asked to grow its bio-engineered soybean lines without securing further USDA permits or acknowledged notifications, according to John Payne, acting director of biotechnology, biologics and environmental protection for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"After reviewing information submitted by Monsanto, as well as other relevant data and public comments, we'll determine whether it is appropriate to approve or deny this request that we no longer regulate the soybean lines involved," Payne said.

The soybean line, known as glyphosate-tolerant soybean line 40-3-2, or GTS line 40-3-2, is currently regulated because it contains gene sequences derived from plant pathogenic sources. Monsanto describes the GTS line 40-3-2 as soybeans that have been genetically engineered to tolerate the herbicide glyphosate.

Payne said that USDA regulators have the responsibility to assure that in releasing any bio-engineered plant, no plant pest risk is presented. APHIS reviewers focus on the biology, propagation and cultivation of the plant. The reviewers examine the source of the engineered genes, the vector used to transfer them and the stability of the insertion (in the current review process, APHIS regulators will inspect all the data).

Notice of the USDA action was published in the Dec. 6 Federal Register. Comments will be considered if received on or before Feb. 4, 1994. An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket 93-148-1 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments may be inspected at USDA, Room 1141 South Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., or at USDA, Suite 7 (first floor) Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

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Release No. 0007.94
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

**USDA ANNOUNCES FINAL 1994 UPLAND COTTON ACREAGE REDUCTION**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced that the acreage reduction percentage for 1994-crop upland cotton will be 11 percent. This is a 6.5 percentage point reduction from the preliminary level announced on November 1 and reflects tightened 1993-crop supplies resulting from a reduction in estimated U.S. and foreign cotton production in 1993. Espy said that the 11 percent acreage reduction for 1994 is projected by USDA to be the level which most closely conforms with applica-ble statutory requirements regarding the maintenance of a desirable end-of-year stock level.

The announced upland cotton acreage reduction percentage is lower than the preliminary level, so upland cotton producers in 'early planting areas' will not be unfairly disadvantaged by the change. Producers in those areas will be required to comply with today's announced reduction in 1994 in order to be eligible for 1994 program benefits.

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Release No. 0008.94
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

**USDA DETERMINES SUGAR MARKETING ALLOTMENT UNNECESSARY FOR 1994 FY 2ND QUARTER**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that sugar marketing allotments for domestic sugar will not be established during the second quarter of Fiscal Year 1994.

This determination is based on December estimates of the U.S. sugar situation and outlook for FY 1994. Re-estimates of the fiscal year sugar supply and distribution will be made quarterly to determine if marketing allotments are to be established later in the fiscal year.

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Release No. 0010.94
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**CCC INTEREST RATE FOR JANUARY 3 5/8 PERCENT**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4 -- Commodity loans disbursed in January by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 3 5/8 percent interest rate, according to Grant Buntrock, executive vice president of the CCC.

The 3 5/8 percent is up from December's 3 1/2 percent and reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury.

Any outstanding 1981 crop commodity loans approved and disbursed on or after April 1, 1981 and before January 1, 1994 will accrue interest at a rate of 3 5/8 during 1994. This interest rate is subject to adjustment each January 1.

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Release No. 0013.94
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**USDA TO HOLD FOUR HEARINGS ON ORGANIC LIVESTOCK**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold four public hearings in early 1994 on the production and processing of organic livestock.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the hearings will be held Jan. 27-28 in Washington, D.C., Feb. 10 in Chicago, Ill., Feb. 24 in Denver, Colo., and March 22 in Sacramento, Calif. All hearings will run from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The purpose of the hearings is to provide the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and the Department with additional information as they develop regulatory standards for organic livestock and livestock products.

USDA seeks input from the public on a broad range of issues, including:

- Production standards needed to regulate the purchase of slaughter stock intended for sale as organic meat products;
- Criteria needed to ensure that subtherapeutic doses of antibiotics and routine applications of synthetic internal parasiticides are not applied to organically labeled livestock;
- Reasonable exceptions for feed for organically raised livestock;
- Safeguards necessary to permit organically and non-organically raised animals of the same species to be produced on the same farming operation;
- Safeguards for ensuring the separation of organic and non-organic products or penetration of prohibited chemicals in processing facilities; and
- Management and audit trail records necessary to ensure the integrity of the retail organic livestock product.

Persons planning to give oral testimony at any of the hearings should notify USDA at least seven days in advance of the hearing. Those who are unable to attend the hearings may submit written testimony up to 15 days following the last hearing.

Notice of the hearings appeared in the Dec. 30 Federal Register. For more information, or to receive a copy of the notice, contact Dr. Harold S. Ricker, Staff Director, National Organic Program, Transportation and Marketing Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, Room 4006-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

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Release No. 0014.94
Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898
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**USDA DECLARES KANSAS FREE OF SWINE BRUCELLOSIS**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service today added Kansas to the list of states considered free of swine brucellosis.

This upgrade in Kansas' classification will relieve certain restrictions on the interstate movement of breeding swine from the State. Breeding swine from Kansas may now be moved interstate without being officially tested for brucellosis -- a change that should reduce costs for some swine producers.

To be classified by APHIS as validated-brucellosis-free, a state can have no diagnosed cases of swine brucellosis for a 12-month period and must also meet certain herd and market testing and surveillance requirements.

Swine brucellosis is close to being eradicated from swine herds in the United States, with fewer than 40 infected herds remaining in five states. The goal of the eradication program, coordinated by APHIS in cooperation with the swine industry and the state departments of agriculture, is to declare the entire country free of swine brucellosis by 1996.

Swine brucellosis is caused by the bacteria Brucella suis, which multiply rapidly and spread to the joints, udder and reproductive organs of infected swine. The disease causes infected pigs to have reduced reproductive abilities, spontaneous abortions and lameness in the rear legs. Although swine brucellosis primarily affects pigs, the disease can be transmitted to humans, horses, cattle, reindeer and dogs. People most at risk for contracting brucellosis are slaughterhouse workers, farmers, and veterinarians who may come into contact with contaminated swine and their infected urine or genital discharges.

The interim rule was effective upon its publication in the Dec. 28 Federal Register. To submit comments, send an original and three copies of written comments referring to Docket No. 93-144-1 on or before Feb. 28: to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, Policy and Program Development, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville MD 20782. Comments once received may be inspected at USDA, Room 1141 South Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing to inspect comments are encouraged to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the comment reading room.

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Release No. 0015.94
Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

**USDA ANNOUNCES SECOND WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM SIGNUP**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5--The second Wetlands Reserve Program signup will be held February 28 through March 11, 1994, according to Grant Buntrock, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS).

"Landowners in Arkansas, California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin will have the opportunity to enroll eligible acreage in the WRP," Buntrock said.

The Wetlands Reserve Program, funded at $66.675 million to enroll up to 75,000 acres during Fiscal Year 1994, protects and restores habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, helps purify water supplies, and helps absorb flood waters.

Last funded in FY 1992 with a limitation of 50,000 acres, landowners on 2,337 farms sought enrollment for over 462,000 acres. Acreage was tentatively accepted for 49,888 acres on 265 farms. This acreage will be restored to 30,868 acres to forested wetlands, 14,105 acres to emergent wetlands, 3,374 acres to scrub-shrub and other types of wetlands and 1,542 acres of riparian area or upland buffers.

About 7,509 acres will directly benefit the recovery of threatened or endangered species. Another 30,085 acres may be utilized by threatened or endangered species or lie within ongoing State or Federal wetland restoration and wildlife project areas.

Under the program, permanent easements are purchased from participating landowners of farmed wetlands; prior converted wetlands; and riparian areas that link wetlands. Participants agree to accept no more than the fair market value of their land for agricultural use, in return for a lump sum payment and cost-share assistance for implementing wetland restoration practices. Specified compatible uses are permitted on the restored acreage by the landowner and any successors. USDA's Soil Conservation Service and the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service will assist ASCS in determining the eligibility and environmental quality of the acres offered by landowners.

"Many provisions which applied to the first WRP signup held in June, 1992 are applicable to this signup," Buntrock said. "However, State ASCS Committees will be given greater discretion in selecting wetlands that meet specific State environmental goals, such as flood protection, water quality, migratory birds and wildlife habitat benefits."

Buntrock said interested landowners should contact their local ASCS office for further information.

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Release No. 0018.94
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Ron Hall (202) 720-3310

**USDA PROTECTS 20 NEW PLANT VARIETIES**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued certificates of protection to developers of 20 new varieties of seed-reproduced plants including alfalfa, barley, corn, tall fescue, lobelia, oat, pea, soybean and wheat.

Kenneth H. Evans, commissioner of the Plant Variety and Protection Office with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service in Washington, D.C., said developers of the new varieties will have the exclusive right to reproduce, sell, import and export their products in the United States for 18 years. Certificates of protection are granted after a review of the breeders' records and claims that each new variety is novel, uniform and stable.

The following varieties have been issued certificates of protection:

--the Viking 1 variety of alfalfa, developed by the Northrup King Co., Minneapolis, Minn.;
--the Duel variety of barley, developed by Busch Agricultural Resources Inc., Fort Collins, Colo.;
--the LH159 variety of corn, developed by Holden's Foundation Seeds Inc., Williamsburg, Iowa;
--the PHMK0 variety of corn, developed by Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc., Johnston, Iowa;
--the Thunderbird variety of tall fescue, developed by Pure-Seed Testing Inc., Hubbard, Ore.;
--the Midnight Moon variety of lobelia, developed by Sluis & Groot Research, Fort Wayne, Ind.;
--the Brawn variety of oat, developed by the University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.;
--the Magnum II variety of oat, developed by Frederick B. Ledeboer, Aurora, Ore.;
--the PJ 7625 variety of pea, developed by the Rogers NK Seed Co., Boise, Idaho;
--the 9221 variety of soybean, developed by Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc., Johnston, Iowa;
--the Waco, Ponderosa and Hickory varieties of wheat, developed by AgriPro Biosciences Inc., Shawnee Mission, Kan.;
--the ATW 270 and Florida 303 varieties of wheat, developed by the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station, Gainesville, Fla.;
--the 814 and Coker 9904 varieties of wheat, developed by the Northrup King Co., Washington, Iowa;
--the Haven and Discovery varieties of wheat, developed by Goertzen Seed Research, Haven, Kan.; and
--the Vandal variety of wheat, developed by the Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station, Moscow, Idaho.

Certificates of protection are being issued for sale by variety name only as a class of certified seed and to conform to the number of generations specified by the owner for the following: the Duel barley variety; the Brawn oat variety; and the Waco, ATW 270, Florida 303, Discovery, Coker 9904, Ponderosa and Hickory wheat varieties.

AMS administers the plant variety protection program which provides marketing protection to developers of new and distinctive seed-reproduced plants ranging from farm crops to flowers.

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Release No. 0019.94
EPA - Sean McElheny (202) 260-1387
USDA - Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623
Army - George Halford (202) 272-1801
Interior - Craig Rieben (202) 208-5634

**NEW AGREEMENT AMONG FOUR FEDERAL AGENCIES MAKES SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE THE LEAD AGENCY FOR WETLANDS ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6--Four federal agencies with wetlands protection responsibilities, in a new memorandum of agreement signed today, recognize the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service as the lead federal agency for delineating wetlands on agricultural lands. This action will provide more certainty for farmers and provide more effective coordination among federal agencies with wetlands protection responsibilities.

The memorandum of agreement among the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, and Army and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implements one of many recommendations regarding federal wetlands policies included in the Clinton Administration's August 24, 1993, fair, flexible and effective approach to managing America's wetlands.

Under today's agreement, farmers will be able to rely on Soil Conservation Service wetland maps for determining the extent of wetlands under both the Farm Bill (also known as the Swampbuster program) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Previously, farmers participating in U.S. farm programs received a wetland map from the Soil Conservation Service for Swampbuster purposes only. If that farmer needed a Section 404 permit for work in wetlands, the Corps of Engineers or the EPA required an additional wetland delineation. The agreement eliminates this duplication of effort and gives the farmer one wetland determination from the federal government. Farmers can now rely on a single wetland determination by the Soil Conservation Service for Swampbuster and Section 404 purposes. The Section 404 regulatory program will continue to be administered by the Corps of Engineers and the EPA.

Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment James R. Lyons said, "Consistent with the Administration's overall wetlands policy, this agreement is good for farmers and for the environment. It simplifies the process of identifying wetlands for farmers and will more efficiently inform them of federal wetland conservation programs. We look forward to working closely and cooperatively with the other agencies to make this agreement work."

Interior Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks George T. Frampton, Jr., said, "This agreement represents a common sense approach to administering wetlands programs affecting our Nation's farmers. We are minimizing duplication of effort and recognizing the relative expertise of the federal agencies, while improving the accuracy and consistency of wetland determinations on agricultural lands. It's good for farmers and for wetlands."

EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Robert Perciasepe said, "This agreement is based on one of the most important themes of this Administration's environmental program: interagency partnerships. Through interagency cooperation at the field level, we will all be able to provide better service to farmers while more effectively ensuring protection of the Nation's critical wetlands resources."

G. Edward Dickey, the Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, said, "The interagency agreement should result in an improvement in the accuracy of wetland delineations on agricultural lands through the use of standard methods and better training."

This agreement reflects the commitment of the Administration to implement its wetland policies through a coordinated process focused on eliminating inconsistencies between agency policies, minimizing duplication of efforts, and the accurate delineation of wetlands for use by all agencies.

Copies of the MOA may be obtained by calling the EPA Wetlands Hotline at (800) 832-7828.

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Release No. 0022.94
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**USDA ESTABLISHES NEW QUALITY STANDARDS FOR GRADING OF WHIPPED BUTTER**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has established new quality standards for the grading of whipped butter.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the new standards provide more accurate grading because the product will be evaluated in its final package. Previously, the quality of whipped butter was evaluated prior to the whipping process, using the U.S. Standards for Grades of Butter.

The new standards will:

-- Provide quality specifications for whipped butter at two grade levels (U.S. Grade AA and U.S. Grade A) in the interest of consumer preference for higher quality products;

-- Define flavor characteristics to assist graders in classifying products;

-- Define body, color and salt characteristics, and describe qualities that will cause a product to be reduced in grade; and

-- Establish optional microbiological and keeping-quality tests (not mandatory for grade designation). If requested by the buyer or seller, the product must comply with these specifications.

These new standards establish quality criteria for grade determination of whipped butter packaged in a variety of packaging containers.

USDA has standards for approximately 200 agricultural commodities. Use of most of the standards is voluntary on the part of industry; and, when grading is provided, the user pays a fee for the service.

Details of the new standards are to be published in the Jan. 10 Federal Register. Copies may be obtained from the Office of the Director, Dairy Division, AMS, USDA, Room 2968-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D. C. 20090-6456. For more information, contact Diane D. Lewis, telephone (202) 720-7473.

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Release No. 0023.94
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**GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES PUBLIC LAND 1994 GRAZING FEES FOR 16 WESTERN STATES**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7--The grazing fee for western public lands administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will increase in 1994. The formula used for calculating the fee, established by Congress in the 1978 Public Rangelands Improvement Act, has continued under a presidential Executive Order issued in 1986.

Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas said the new fee is S1.98 per head month (HM), an increase of 12 cents. A head month is the amount of forage needed to sustain one cow and her calf, one horse, or five sheep or goats for a month.

The annually adjusted fee, which takes effect March 1, is computed by using a base fair market value of S1.23 per head month and adjusted for current private land lease rates, beef cattle prices, and the cost of livestock production.

This fee applies to national forests and BLM land in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming and to national grasslands in California, Idaho, and Oregon.

In addition, Thomas announced the 1994 grazing fee for the national grasslands. Under the formula adopted for the 1992 grazing year to provide compatability with the western public lands grazing fee, this fee will be $2.08 per HM, a 4-cent increase from 1993. This grazing fee applies to national grasslands in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.

The fee increase for the national forests and BLM managed lands is a result of an increase in all three values used to calculate the indices for that formula. The indices are: the Private Grazing Land Lease Rate (PGLLR), beef cattle prices, and livestock production costs. For the national grasslands the PGLLR dropped slightly while the other two indices increased.

In 1993, the Forest Service collected about S9.1 million in public land grazing fees from ranchers on national forests in the 16 western states. Half of the total collected is used to improve rangelands, producing both environmental and economic benefits for the western public land states. Of the remaining half, 50 percent is returned to the states as a direct payment and the remainder goes to the U.S. Treasury.

The Forest Service manages about 191 million acres of federal land in 44 States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands for multiple public uses, including grazing. The BLM manages about 270 million acres of Federal land in 11 western states and Alaska for a variety of public uses, such as grazing.

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Release No. 0024.94
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**USDA SETS HEARING ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FIVE MILK ORDERS**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is inviting dairy farmers, cooperative associations, milk handlers and consumers to testify at a hearing on proposals to amend five milk marketing orders. The orders affected are the Chicago Regional, Nebraska-Western Iowa, Upper Midwest, Eastern South Dakota and Iowa.

The hearing will begin Jan. 25, 1994, at 9 a.m. at the Sheraton Inn Airport, 2500 East 79th St., Minneapolis, Minn.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said several associations representing dairy farmers requested the hearing to consider versions of a multiple component pricing plan.

The multiple component pricing plans, proposed for all five marketing orders, would result in milk being priced on the basis of its protein and non-protein nonfat solids, as well as its butterfat content and volume. Some of the proposals would include adjustments to prices paid to producers on the basis of somatic cell content, or some other quality factor, of the milk.

Hatamiya said the proposals are similar to multiple component pricing plans now in effect or recommended for other milk marketing orders.

Proponents of multiple component pricing believe milk order prices should more closely reflect the value of milk components sold to processors.

The hearing notice was published in the Jan. 4 Federal Register. Copies are available from H. Paul Kyburz, Market Administrator, 4570 W. 77th St., Suite 210, Minneapolis, Minn. 55435-5037; Myron R. McKinley, Market Administrator, Building A, Suite 200, 800 Roosevelt Road, Glen Ellyn, Ill. 60137; James H Williamson, Market Administrator, 14827 West 95 St., Lenexa, Kan. 66215-5220; or USDA/AMS/Dairy Division, Order Formulation Branch, Rm 2971-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, telephone (202) 720-7183.

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# Program Announcements-

Release No. 0001.94
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

**USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF TOBACCO IMPORTER ASSESSMENTS**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation is seeking public comment on regulations implementing importer assessments on tobacco.

The marketing assessments are required by amendments to the Omnibus Budget Reconcilation Act of 1993 and will begin on January 1, 1994. They will be imposed on all imported unmanufactured tobacco. There will also be a no-net-cost assessment on all imported unmanufactured burley and flue-cured tobacco.

The marketing assessment rate will be 1.63 cents per pound on all imported unmanufactured tobacco. The no-net-cost assessment rates are 2.817 cents per pound for imported burley tobacco and 2.423 cents per pound for imported flue-cured tobacco. The assessment rates will change on July 1 and October 1 of each year.

An interim rule was published in the Federal Register on December 23, 1993. Comments must be received by January 24, 1994, to be assured of consideration and should be sent to Director, Tobacco/Peanuts Division, USDA/ASCS, Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013. Comments will be available for public inspection in Room 5750 of USDA's South Building during normal business hours.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Release No. 0009.94
Gene Rosera (202) 720-6734
Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

**USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4--Under Secretary of Agriculture Eugene Moos today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| --long grain whole kernels: | 11.77 cents per pound |
| --medium grain whole kernels: | 11.05 cents per pound |
| --short grain whole kernels: | 10.97 cents per pound |
| --broken kernels: | 5.88 cents per pound |

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are zero.

These announced prices are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Jan. 11 at 3 p.m. EST.

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Release No. 0011.94
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

**USDA TO PERMIT PLANTING OF 1994-CROP SOYBEANS ON OPTIONAL FLEXIBLE ACRES**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that soybeans may be planted on optional flexible acreage in

Producers may plant designated crops on up to 25 percent of each crop acreage base enrolled in the Commodity Credit Corporation's 1994 price support and production adjustment programs for wheat, feed grains, upland cotton and rice. The crops planted can be credited as "considered planted" to the program crop. Twenty-five percent of each crop acreage base is referred to as flexible acres with the first 15 percent referred to as "normal flexible acreage" and the other 10 percent referred to as "optional flexible acreage".

Producers who plant program crops or oilseeds on optional flexible acres may receive price support for these crops. However, as required by the Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, deficiency payments cannot be made on optional flexible acreage when it is planted to a crop other than the crop for which the crop acreage base has been established.

The 1949 Act provides that soybeans may not be planted on optional flexible acreage if, on January 1, the estimated price of 1994-crop soybeans is less than $5.17 per bushel, i.e., 105 percent of the 1994 loan rate of $4.92 per bushel. Because the soybean price is projected to be greater than $5.17, soybeans may be planted on this acreage.

♦♦♦♦♦

Release No. 0012.94
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

**USDA ANNOUNCES FINAL 1994 ELS COTTON ACREAGE REDUCTION AT 15 PERCENT**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that the acreage reduction percentage for 1994-crop extra long staple (ELS) cotton will be 15 percent. The acreage reduction percentage for 1994 is 5 percentage points lower than that in effect for the 1993 crop.

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Release No. 0016.94
Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898
Ron Hall (202) 720-3310

**USDA TO REQUIRE UNIFORM EARTAGS ON IMPORTED MEXICAN CATTLE**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6--The U.S. Department of Agriculture is now requiring that all cattle imported from Mexico be identified with numbered blue eartags issued by the Mexican government.

At the request of Mexican officials, the amended regulations state that the official eartags are issued by the Secretaria de Agricultura y Recursos Hidraulicos (SARH), which is the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.

This uniform eartag identification will help to ensure that APHIS can trace all imported cattle back to their original herds in Mexico. Previously, the import regulations did not standardize either the color or source of the eartags, although numbered metal tags have been required for identifying cattle imported into this country from Mexico since 1990.

Each year, about one million Mexican cattle are imported into the United States. About 99 percent of cattle imported are young steers consigned to feedlots before slaughter.

The final rule was published in the Dec. 28 Federal Register.

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Release No. 0017.94
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Ron Hall (202) 720-3310

**USDA TO CHARGE USER FEES FOR VETERINARY SERVICES PROVIDED FOR IMPORT & EXPORT**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6--The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that on Jan. 21, 1994, it will begin charging user fees for veterinary services it provides directly to importers and exporters of animals, animal products and biological materials.

The 1990 Farm Bill authorized USDA to collect fees to recover the costs of services it provides to carry out provisions of federal animal quarantine laws that relate to the importation, entry and exportation of animals, articles or means of conveyance. USDA'S Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service conducts inspections and tests of animals and animal products moving internationally to prevent the spread of pests and diseases. These import/export-related user fees for veterinary services are expected to save taxpayers an estimated $3.4 to $4.5 million each year.

These fees will be charged to individuals receiving various USDA services, including the following:

--Import-related inspections and services provided at ports along the U.S. borders with Mexico and Canada;

--Inspections and approval of facilities importing animals, animal products or biological materials;

--Inspections and processing of animals and animal products at U.S. ports of entry;

--Approval of slaughter establishments;

--Inspections of pet birds entering the United States and supervision of the quarantine and testing of these birds (except pet birds from Canada);

--Processing paperwork and endorsing export and import permits for germplasm; and

--Processing releases of animals and animal products from agricultural quarantine.

This final rule was published in the Dec. 22 Federal Register.

The final Regulatory Impact Analysis of these user fees is available for public review at USDA, Room 1141 South Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing access to the document are encouraged to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry to the comment reading room.

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Release No. 0020.94
Janise Zygmont (202) 720-6734

**USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6--Grant Buntrock, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price or AWP), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (leaf grade 4, micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality), and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 13. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Jan. 7 through midnight Thursday, Jan. 13.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 96 percent of the 1993 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 3.00 cents per pound. Following are the relevant calculations:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. | Calculated AWP .................... | 50.03 | cents per pound |
| | 1993 Base Loan Rate ............... | 52.35 | cents per pound |
| | AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate ..... | 96 | |
| II. | USNE Price ........................ | 66.75 | cents per pound |
| | NE Price .......................... | - 63.75 | cents per pound |
| | Maximum Adjustment Allowed ........ | 3.00 | cents per pound |

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adjusted World Price | | | |
| NE Price .................................. | | 63.75 | |
| Adjustments: | | | |
| Avg. U.S. spot market location ..... | 11.91 | | |
| SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton ............. | 1.50 | | |
| Avg. U.S. location ................. | 0.31 | | |
| Sum of Adjustments ........................ | | - 13.72 | |
| Calculated AWP ............................ | | 50.03 | |
| Further AWP adjustment .................... | | - 0 | |
| ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE ...................... | | 50.03 | cents/lb. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Coarse Count Adjustment | | |
| NE Price ................................ | 63.75 | |
| NE Coarse Count Price ................... | - 60.46 | |
| | 3.29 | |
| Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton ........ | - 3.20 | |
| COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT .................. | 0.09 | cents/lb. |

Because the AWP is below 52.35 cents per pound, the base quality loan rate for both the 1992 and 1993 marketing years, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the AWP, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is below the 1993-crop loan rate, cash loan deficiency payments (LDPs) will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo obtaining a price support loan with respect to the 1993 crop. The payment rate is equal to the difference between the loan rate and the AWP. Producers are allowed to obtain an LDP on a bale-by-bale basis.

The USNE price has exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is 1.75 cents per pound. This rate is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to Sept. 30, 1994. Relevant data are summarized below:

| Week | For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending | USNE Price | NE Price | User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | ..... | cents/lb | ..... |
| 1 | Dec. 16, 1993 | 62.30 | 59.09 | 1.96 |
| 2 | Dec. 23, 1993 | 63.50 | 60.62 | 1.63 |
| 3 | Dec. 30, 1993 | 65.50 | 62.00 | 2.25 |
| 4 | Jan. 6, 1994 | 66.75 | 63.75 | 1.75 |

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, Jan. 13, at 5 p.m.

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