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USDA Actions

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USDA regularly implements operational and regulatory changes that affect the status of food and nutrition in the United States. Here are some recent actions.

USDA Awards Grants for School Breakfast Programs in 30 States

USDA has awarded $5 million in Federal grants to school districts in 30 States to help start breakfast programs during the 1991/92 school year. More than 5,000 schools and 500,000 children have been added to the program nationwide since 1989.

The program is now available in more than 45,000 schools, and more than 4 million children participate daily. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, which administers the School Breakfast Program, provided $3 million for 1990, and will make available $5 million for programs each year through 1994.

The author is a statistical assistant in the Agriculture and Trade Analysis Division, Economic Research Service, USDA.

Cheddar Cheese Added to Dairy Export Incentive Program

USDA announced that 41 countries are eligible to buy up to 32,550 metric tons of U.S. Cheddar cheese under the Dairy Export Incentive Program. Export sales under the program will be facilitated through the payment of bonuses in the form of commodities from the inventory of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation. Sales of Cheddar cheese will be made through normal commercial channels at competitive world prices.

USDA Revises Standards For Bulk American Cheese

The revised standards for grades of bulk American cheese will reflect developments in cheesemaking technology. American cheese consists of four varieties of hard cheese made in the United States: Cheddar, Colby, granular cheese, and washed curd.

New Grade Standards for Dried Buttermilk

Effective August 23, 1991, USDA revised the U.S. grade standards for dried buttermilk to reflect changes in buttermilk marketings since the last revision in 1985. The changes extend the standards for buttermilk produced from sweet cream to include cream separated from whey (the liquid produced in cheesemaking) and cultured cream (sweet cream to which certain beneficial bacteria that produce lactic acid are added.)

The revision also establishes two major categories, "dry buttermilk" and "dry buttermilk product," which are distinguished by their protein content. "Dry buttermilk" has to meet a minimum standard

of 30-percent protein, and "dry buttermilk product" has less than 30-percent protein. USDA developed the revision based on the initiative of the American Dairy Products Institute. Details of the rule were published in the July 24, 1991, *Federal Register*.

Potato Research and Promotion Program Amended

USDA is amending the national Potato Research and Promotion Plan to add Alaska and Hawaii to the program, and to reflect certain provisions in the 1990 farm bill. Details of the amendments and the referendum appeared as a final rule in the August 14, 1991, *Federal Register*. Copies and additional information are available from Arthur L. Pease, AMS, USDA, Fruit and Vegetable Division, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Rm. 2525-S, PO Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456.

Special California Citrus Crop Insurance

USDA announced availability of a special crop insurance policy for California citrus growers who are not currently enrolled in the Federal crop insurance program. USDA's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation is developing the policy offering for California citrus crops severely damaged during the December 1990 freeze.

Changed Pork Purchase Specifications

USDA will revise the Institutional Meat Purchase Specifications (IMPS) for cured, smoked, and cooked pork to reflect public interest in lower fat pork and to incorporate current processing technology.

Pork Order Import Assessments Increase

Effective July 10, 1991, USDA increased assessments on imported pork and pork products by 0.04 to 0.05 cent per pound (the equivalent of 0.09 to 0.11 cent per kilogram). The increase reflects 23-percent higher hog prices paid at major U.S. markets this past year. The assessment adjustment is authorized by the Pork Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act of 1985. ■