

WSR 24-23-104

PERMANENT RULES

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

[Filed November 20, 2024, 11:07 a.m., effective December 21, 2024]

Effective Date of Rule: Thirty-one days after filing.

Purpose: In response to a petition for rule making, the department of agriculture is proposing to clarify current rule language by replacing all gender-specific pronouns with modern gender-inclusive pronouns.

Citation of Rules Affected by this Order: Amending WAC 16-516-003, 16-516-010, 16-516-020, 16-516-040, and 16-516-205.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 15.24.035, 15.26.060, 15.28.023, 15.44.021, 15.65.240, 15.66.113, 15.88.050, 15.89.050, 15.115.060, 16.67.060.

Other Authority: RCW 43.01.160, 43.23.025.

Adopted under notice filed as WSR 24-19-065 on September 16, 2024.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Comply with Federal Statute: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Federal Rules or Standards: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Recently Enacted State Statutes: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted at the Request of a Nongovernmental Entity: New 0, Amended 5, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted on the Agency's own Initiative: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Clarify, Streamline, or Reform Agency Procedures: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted using Negotiated Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Pilot Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Other Alternative Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Date Adopted: November 20, 2024.

Derek I. Sandison
Director

OTS-5816.1

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending Order and Findings, effective 7/23/56)

WAC 16-516-003 Director's order making marketing order effective and creating a potato commission. (1) Whereas, the director of agriculture of the state of Washington acting pursuant to and by virtue of the authority vested in ~~((him))~~ the director by the provisions of the Washington Agricultural Enabling Act, being chapter 15.66 RCW, issued on June 6, 1956, that certain marketing order entitled, "Marketing Order for Washington Potatoes Providing for the Creation of a Washington Potato Commission," for the written referendum assent of the affected producers in accordance with RCW 15.66.090; and ~~((7))~~

(2) Whereas, the director of agriculture has found that more than ~~((fifty-one))~~ 51 percent of the affected producers have replied to the written referendum within the time specified by the director and that said marketing order for Washington potatoes has been assented to in writing by more than ~~((sixty-five))~~ 65 percent of the producers who

produced more than (~~fifty-one~~) 51 percent by volume of the said potatoes reported produced in the state of Washington during the past five years; said determination being based upon the official affected producer list of potato producers established by the director pursuant to the provisions of RCW 15.66.060, which list is now on file in the department; said affected producers being qualified to assent to said marketing order;

(3) Now therefore, I, Sverre N. Omdahl, director of the department of agriculture of the state of Washington, acting pursuant to and by virtue of the authority vested in me by said act, do hereby make effective the said marketing order for Washington potatoes providing for the creation of a Washington potato commission, said order to be effective at 12:01 a.m. July 23, 1956.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 17-05-033, filed 2/8/17, effective 3/11/17)

WAC 16-516-010 Definitions. The following terms shall have the meanings given in RCW 15.66.010, supplemented by the following additional definitions:

"Act" means the Washington state agricultural commodity commissions statute, chapter 15.66 RCW;

"Affected area" or "area of production" are synonymous and mean all of the state of Washington;

"Affected commodity" means potatoes as defined in this section;

"Affected handler" means any handler of potatoes;

"Affected producer" means any producer who is subject to this marketing order;

"Agricultural development" means activities intended to increase the efficiency, productivity, or fair market access of Washington potatoes and potato products;

"Commercial quantities" shall mean and include five hundredweight or more per growing season;

"Disclosure" means inspection or copying;

"Director" means the director of agriculture of the state of Washington or any qualified person or persons designated by the director of agriculture to act (~~for him or her~~) on the director's behalf concerning some matter under this chapter;

"District" means the geographical divisions of the area of potato production established pursuant to the provisions of WAC 16-516-020;

"Handler" means any person who acts, either as principal, agent, or otherwise, in the processing, packing, shipping, selling, marketing, or distributing of potatoes that are not produced by the handler. "Handler" does not include a common carrier used to transport an agricultural commodity. "To handle" means to act as a handler;

"Hundredweight" or "affected unit" are synonymous and mean and include each (~~one hundred~~) 100 pound unit or any combination of packages making a (~~one hundred~~) 100 pound unit of potatoes;

"Marketing season" or "fiscal year" are synonymous and mean the (~~twelve~~) 12-month period beginning July 1st of any year and ending upon the last day of June, both dates inclusive;

"Person" includes any individual, firm, corporation, limited liability company, trust, association, partnership, society or any other organization of individuals or any unit or agency of local or state government;

"Potato commission" or "commission" are synonymous and mean the commission established pursuant to the provisions of WAC 16-516-020;

"Potatoes" means and includes all kinds and varieties of Irish potatoes grown in the state of Washington and marketed, sold or intended for use for human consumption;

"Producer" means any person engaged in the production of potatoes grown in Washington for market in commercial quantities, and it includes a landowner, landlord, tenant or other person that participates in the growing or producing of the affected commodity and who has a proprietary interest in the potatoes so produced. "To produce" means to act as a producer;

"Public records" includes any writing containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used, or retained by the department regardless of physical form or characteristics;

"Research" means scientific research conducted by a university or other accredited researcher on pest and disease surveys; pest and disease control tools or techniques; planting, harvesting, handling and other production or processing tools or techniques; health or nutritional qualities or benefits of potatoes or potato products; and environmental issues including, but not limited to, water use, water quality, water quantity, and erosion control related to production of potatoes or potato products. Results of agricultural research conducted under the provisions of this marketing order shall be public information;

"Sale" means a transaction wherein the property in or to potatoes is transferred from the producer to a purchaser for consideration.

"Sale" shall also include an agreement to acquire such property for a consideration;

"Unfair trade practice" means any practice that is unlawful or prohibited under the laws of the state of Washington including but not limited to Titles 15, 16, and 69 RCW and chapters 9.16, 19.77, 19.80, 19.84, and 19.83 RCW, or any practice, whether concerning interstate or intrastate commerce that is unlawful under the Federal Trade Commission Act of 1914, as amended (38 Stat. 719; 15 U.S.C. Sec. 41 et seq.) or the violation of or failure to accurately label as to grades and standards in accordance with any lawfully established grades or standards or labels.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 06-03-003, filed 1/4/06, effective 2/4/06)

WAC 16-516-020 Potato commission. (1) Establishment and membership. A potato commission is hereby established to administer this marketing order which shall be composed of nine members who shall be producers elected from districts as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section and five members who shall be appointed by the elected producer members as provided in subsection (4) of this section. In addition, the director shall appoint one member to the commission to represent the director as a voting member of the commission.

(2) Representative districts. For the purpose of nomination and selection of producer members of the commission, the affected area of the state of Washington shall be divided into three representative districts as follows:

(a) "District No. 1" shall be and include the counties of Douglas, Chelan, Okanogan, Grant, Adams, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Whitman and Lincoln.

(b) "District No. 2" shall be and include the counties of Kittitas, Yakima, Klickitat, Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, and Asotin.

(c) "District No. 3" shall be and include the counties of Skagit and all other counties in the state of Washington.

(3) Elected membership. Producer members shall be elected from the districts as follows:

(a) Positions 1, 2, 3, and 4 shall be elected from District No. 1.

(b) Positions 5, 6, 7, and 8 shall be elected from District No. 2.

(c) Position 9 shall be elected from District No. 3.

(4) Appointed membership.

(a) Positions 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 shall be appointed by the elected producers as provided in subsections (1) and (5)(b) of this section.

(b) Position 15 shall be appointed by the director as provided in subsection (1) of this section.

(5) Membership qualifications. Commission members shall be citizens and residents of this state, over the age of (~~eighteen~~) 18 years.

(a) Producer members of the commission shall be producers of potatoes in the district in and for which they are nominated and elected. The producer members shall be and have been actively engaged in producing potatoes for a period of at least three years, and shall derive a substantial proportion of their incomes from the sale of potatoes. A producer member of the commission must have paid an assessment to the commission on potatoes in each of the preceding three calendar years. The qualifications of producer members of the commission as herein set forth must continue during their term of office.

(b) Members of the commission appointed by the elected producers to positions 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 shall be potato producers or handlers or others active in matters directly relating to Washington state potatoes and have a demonstrated record of service in the potato industry in Washington state.

(6) Term of office. The term of office of the elected and appointed producer members of the commission shall be three years from the date of their election or appointment and until their successors are elected or appointed and qualified. Commencing on July 1, 2005, the term of office for members of the commission shall be as follows: Positions 1, 5 and 7 shall terminate June 30, 2008; positions 3, 4 and 6 shall terminate June 30, 2006; positions 2, 8 and 9 shall terminate June 30, 2007; positions 10 and 11 shall terminate June 30, 2008; positions 12 and 14 shall terminate June 30, 2006; and position 13 shall terminate June 30, 2007.

(7) Nomination and election of commission members. Nomination and election of commission members shall be as set forth in the act and specified by the director. Dates will be set as follows:

(a) Not earlier than March 18th and not later than April 2nd of each year, the director shall give notice by mail to all producers in each district in which one or more open positions will occur in the commission and call for nominations. Nominating petitions shall be signed by five persons qualified to vote for such candidates. Such notice shall state the final date for filing said petitions which shall

be not earlier than April 7th and not later than April 12th of each year.

(b) Not earlier than April 17th and not later than May 2nd of each year, the director shall mail ballots to all affected producers in each district in which one or more open positions will occur. Ballots must be received by the director not later than June 1st of such year. Such mailed ballot shall be conducted in a manner so that it shall be a secret ballot in accordance with rules adopted by the director. An affected producer is entitled to one vote.

(c) Each appointed producer member of the commission shall be elected by majority vote of the elected commissioners in a public vote at a public meeting held within (~~ninety~~) 90 days prior to the expiration of the appointed member's term.

(8) Vacancies. In the event of a vacancy on the board in an elected or commission-appointed position, the remaining members shall select a qualified person to fill the unexpired term. The appointment shall be made at the board's first or second meeting after the position becomes vacant. Any member so appointed shall serve until the normal expiration of (~~his or her~~) their term.

(9) Powers and duties of commission. The commission shall have the following powers and duties:

(a) To administer, enforce, direct and control the provisions of this marketing order and of the act relating thereto;

(b) To elect a chairman and such other officers as the commission may deem advisable; and to select subcommittees of commission members;

(c) To adopt, rescind, and amend rules reasonably necessary for the administration and operation of the commission and the enforcement of its duties under this marketing order;

(d) To employ and discharge at its discretion such administrators and additional personnel, attorneys, research agencies and other persons and firms that it may deem appropriate and pay compensation to the same;

(e) To acquire personal property and lease office space and other necessary real property and transfer and convey the same;

(f) To institute and maintain in its own name any and all legal actions, including actions by injunction, mandatory injunction or civil recovery, or proceedings before administrative tribunals or other governmental authorities necessary to carry out the provisions of the act and of this marketing order;

(g) To keep accurate records of all its receipts and disbursements, which records shall be open to inspection and audit by the department and other legal agencies of the state and make annual reports therefrom to the state auditor;

(h) To borrow money and incur indebtedness;

(i) To make necessary disbursements for routine operating expenses;

(j) To collect the assessments of producers as provided in this marketing order and to expend the same in accordance with and to effectuate the purposes of the act and this marketing order;

(k) To prepare a budget or budgets covering anticipated income and expenses to be incurred in carrying out the provisions of this marketing order during each fiscal year. The commission, at least (~~forty-five~~) 45 days prior to the beginning of its fiscal year, shall prepare and submit to the director its budget, research plan, and its commodity-related education and training plan;

(l) To accept and receive gifts and grants from private persons or private and public agencies and expend the same to effectuate the purposes of the act and this order;

(m) To work cooperatively with other local, state, and federal agencies; universities; and national organizations for the purposes set forth in this marketing order;

(n) To enter into contracts or interagency agreements with any private or public agency, whether federal, state, or local, to carry out the purposes set forth in this marketing order. Personal service contracts must comply with chapter 39.29 RCW;

(o) To enter into contracts or agreements for research in the production, irrigation, processing, transportation, use, distribution and trade barriers impacting potatoes and potato products;

(p) To retain in emergent situations the services of private legal counsel to conduct legal actions on behalf of the commission. The retention of a private attorney is subject to review by the office of the attorney general;

(q) To participate in international, federal, state, and local hearings, meetings, and other proceedings relating to the production, irrigation, manufacture, regulation, transportation, distribution, sale or use of potatoes as requested by any elected official or officer or employee of any agency and as authorized under RCW 42.17.190, including the reporting of those activities to the public disclosure commission;

(r) To assist and cooperate with the department or any other local, state, or federal government agency in the investigation and control of exotic pests and diseases that could damage or affect trade of the affected commodity;

(s) To acquire or own intellectual property rights, licenses, or patents and to collect royalties resulting from commission-funded research related to the affected commodity;

(t) To engage in appropriate fund-raising activities for the purpose of supporting activities of the commission authorized by this marketing order;

(u) To establish a foundation using commission funds as grant money for the purposes established in this marketing order;

(v) To maintain a list of the names and addresses of affected producers that may be compiled from information used to collect assessments under the provisions of this marketing order and data on the value of each producer's production for a minimum three-year period pursuant to RCW 15.66.140(18);

(w) To maintain a list of the names and addresses of persons who handle potatoes within the affected area and data on the amount and value of the potatoes handled by each person pursuant to RCW 15.66.140(19) for a minimum three-year period;

(x) To maintain a list of names and addresses of all affected persons who produce potatoes and the amount, by unit, of potatoes produced during the past three years pursuant to RCW 15.66.143(1);

(y) To maintain a list of all persons who handle potatoes and the amount of potatoes handled by each person during the past three years pursuant to RCW 15.66.143(2);

(z) To check records of producers or handlers of the affected commodity during normal business hours to determine whether the appropriate assessment has been paid; and

(aa) To exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as are necessary and proper to effectuate the purposes of the act and of this order.

(10) Procedure for commission.

(a) The commission shall by resolution establish a headquarters which shall continue as such unless and until so changed by the commission, at which headquarters shall be kept the books, records and minutes of the commission meetings.

(b) The commission shall hold regular meetings at least quarterly, with the time and date thereof to be fixed by the resolution of the commission. Notice of the meetings shall be published in the potato commission newsletter and sent to the appropriate general and agricultural media outlets.

(c) The commission may hold such special meetings as it may deem advisable and shall establish by resolution the time, place and manner of calling such special meetings with reasonable notice as required in RCW 42.30.080.

(d) Any action taken by the commission shall require the majority vote of the members present, provided a quorum is present.

(e) A quorum of the commission shall consist of at least nine members.

(f) No members of the commission shall receive any salary or other compensation from the commission, except that each member shall be paid a specified sum to be determined by resolution of the commission, which shall not exceed the compensation rate set by RCW 43.03.230 or state travel expense rates in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 for each day spent in actual attendance at or traveling to and from meetings of the commission or on special assignments for the commission, except the commission may adopt by resolution provisions for reimbursement of actual travel expenses incurred by members of the commission in carrying out the provisions of this marketing order pursuant to RCW 15.66.130.

(11) Limitation of liability of commission members and employees. Obligations incurred by the commission and any other liabilities or claims against the commission shall be enforced only against the assets of the commission in the same manner as if it were a corporation and no liability for the debts or actions of the commission shall exist against either the state of Washington or any subdivision or instrumentality thereof or against any other commission established pursuant to the act or the assets thereof or against any member officer, employee or agent of the commission in (~~his~~) their individual capacity. The members of the commission, including employees thereof, shall not be held responsible individually in any way whatsoever to any person for errors in judgment, mistakes, or other acts, either of commission or omission, as principal agent, person, or employee, except for their own individual acts of dishonesty or crime. No such person or employee shall be held responsible individually for any act or omission of any other member of the commission. The liability of the members of the commission shall be several and not joint and no member shall be liable for the default of any other member.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 06-03-003, filed 1/4/06, effective 2/4/06)

WAC 16-516-040 Assessments and assessment funds. (1) Assessments levied.

(a) On and after the effective date of this order, there is hereby levied and there shall be collected by the commission, as provided

in the act, upon all potatoes grown in the state an annual assessment of four cents per hundredweight which shall be paid by the producer thereof upon each and every hundredweight of potatoes sold, processed, delivered for sale or processing by (~~him or her~~) the producer or stored or delivered for storage when storage or delivery for storage shall be outside the boundaries of this state: Provided, that no assessment shall be collected on the following:

(i) Potatoes grown and sold for seed under an established seed certification program;

(ii) Potatoes sold for livestock feed, regardless of grade;

(iii) Potatoes sold for nonfood products, such as industrial starch;

(iv) Potatoes of a producer's own production used by (~~him or her on his or her~~) the producer on their own premises for seed, feed or personal consumption;

(v) Potatoes donated or shipped for relief or charitable purposes; or

(vi) Sales on a producer's premises by a producer direct to a consumer of (~~five hundred~~) 500 pounds or less of potatoes from a producer's own production.

(b) The commission may provide by rule for an assessment discount not to exceed (~~twenty-five~~) 25 percent of the total hundredweight on field run or ungraded potatoes to allow for cull potatoes not used or intended for use for human consumption.

(c) No assessment levied or made collectable by the act under this order shall exceed three percent of the total market value of all potatoes sold, processed or delivered for sale or processing by all producers of potatoes for the fiscal year to which the assessment applies.

(2) Collection of assessment.

(a) All assessments made and levied pursuant to the provisions of the act under this marketing order shall apply to the respective producer who shall be primarily liable therefore.

(b) Handlers receiving potatoes from the producer, including warehousemen and processors shall collect producer assessments from producers whose production they handle, and all moneys so collected shall be paid to the commission on or before the (~~twentieth~~) 20th day of the succeeding month for the previous month's collections. Each handler shall at times required by rule file with the commission a return under oath on forms to be furnished by the commission, stating the quantity of potatoes handled, processed, delivered and/or shipped during the period prescribed by the commission.

(c) Producer assessments may be paid before the potatoes are shipped off the farm or at different or later times. If assessments are paid after the potatoes are shipped off the farm, any person subject to the assessment shall give adequate assurance or security for its payments as the commission shall require by rule.

(d) The commission may adopt rules in accordance and conformity with the act and with this section to effectuate the collection of assessments. On or before the beginning of each marketing season, the commission shall give reasonable notice to all producers, handlers and other affected persons of the method or methods of collection to be used for that marketing season and of the assessment discount, if any, allowable on field run or ungraded potatoes.

(e) No affected units of potatoes shall be transported, carried, shipped, sold, stored or otherwise handled or disposed of until every due and payable assessment herein provided for has been paid and the

receipt issued, but no liability hereunder shall attach to common carriers in the regular course of their business. When any potatoes for which exemption as provided in subsection (1) of this section is claimed are shipped either by railroad or truck, there shall be plainly noted on the bill of lading, shipping document, container or invoice, the reasons for the exemptions.

(f) Any producer or handler who fails to comply with the provisions of this subsection as herein provided shall be guilty of a violation of this order.

(3) Funds.

(a) Moneys collected by the potato commission pursuant to the act and this marketing order as assessments shall be used by the commission only for the purposes of paying for the costs or expenses arising in connection with carrying out the purposes and provisions of the act and this marketing order.

(b) At the end of each fiscal year the commission shall credit each producer with any amount paid by the producer in excess of three percent of the total market value of all potatoes sold, processed, delivered for sale or processing during that period. Refund may be made only upon satisfactory proof given by the producer, which may include bills of lading, bills of sale, or receipts.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 17-05-033, filed 2/8/17, effective 3/11/17)

WAC 16-516-205 Requests for public records. (1) All requests for disclosure of public records must be submitted in writing directly to the commission's public records officer by mail at 108 Interlake Road, Moses Lake, WA 98837, or by email at publicrecords@potatoes.com. The written request should include:

(a) The name of the person requesting the record and (~~his or her~~) their contact information;

(b) The calendar date on which the request is made; and

(c) Sufficient information to readily identify the records being requested.

(2) Any person wishing to inspect the commission's public records may make an appointment with the public records officer to inspect the records at the commission office during regular business hours. In order to adequately protect the department's public records, the following will apply:

(a) Public records made available for inspection may not be removed from the area the commission makes available for inspection;

(b) Inspection of any public record will be conducted in the presence of the public records officer or designee;

(c) Public records may not be marked or altered in any manner during inspection; and

(d) The commission has the discretion to designate the means and the location for the inspection of records. The viewing of those records that require specialized equipment shall be limited to the availability of that equipment located at the commission office and the availability of authorized staff to operate that equipment.