

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

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USDA ANNOUNCES FINAL DECISION TO AMEND ALL FEDERAL MILK MARKETING ORDERS

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept 23, 2004 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced a final decision that permanently adopts amendments to the classification of milk provisions in all 10 Federal milk marketing orders. These provisions were previously implemented on an interim basis. This decision is based on testimony and evidence from a public hearing held Oct. 21, 2003, in Alexandria, Va.

This decision adopts changes that reclassify milk used to produce evaporated milk or sweetened condensed milk in consumer-type packages from Class III to Class IV. A proposal to classify monthly bulk milk ending inventories to the lowest-priced class of Class III or Class IV is not adopted in this final decision.

The final decision will be published in the Sept. 24 Federal Register. USDA will conduct a vote within 30 days to determine whether dairy farmers approve the amended orders. If approved, a final rule will follow to implement these changes.

Additional information about the decision may be obtained from the market administrator offices as follows:

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An electronic version of this news release can be obtained via the World Wide Web at http://www.ams.usda.gov/news/newsrel.htm

This press release has been retyped by the Minneapolis, Minnesota Market Administrator's office from the original AMS release number 176-04.