



SEP 15 2000

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Marketing and  
Regulatory  
Programs

Agricultural  
Marketing  
Service

P.O.Box 96456  
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NOTICE TO THE TRADE  
Fruit and Vegetable Programs  
Electronic Submission of Bids

The purpose of this Notice is to inform vendors that bids submitted in response to most Fruit and Vegetable Program (F&V) **Invitations issued after October 1, 2000**, may be transmitted electronically through the Domestic Electronic Bid Entry System (DEBES) via the Internet. Only those vendors with a valid logon ID and password will be allowed access to the DEBES system.

Announcements in the 200 number series (FV200, FV201, etc.) have been amended to provide for the electronic submission of bids. The Amendments are available at the Commodity Procurement Home Page on the internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/cp>. **Invitations issued under Announcements in the 100 number series (FV108, FV109, etc.) will continue to receive bids only by fax, mail, or hand delivery.** In summary, the Amendments include the following:

1. Information on submitting bids electronically and requesting a logon ID.
  - a. Internet browser requirements
  - b. Form for requesting a DEBES Logon ID
  - c. Form for requesting additions/changes to plants and shipping points.
  - d. Sample of electronically submitted bid
2. Change in the closing time for all bid submissions (electronic, fax, mail, or hand delivery) from Washington, D.C. (Eastern) time to **CENTRAL TIME**.
3. Change in the items required on offers submitted in response to **Invitations issued after October 1, 2000.**
  - a. Elimination of gross weight.
  - b. Addition of SF129 certification.
  - c. Elimination of constraints by shipping point.

Vendors who wish to bid electronically must request a Logon ID and should update their plant and shipping point information. In the DEBES system, a vendor's plant and shipping point information will display from a database for selection to enter bid data. The completed forms may be faxed or mailed to the Commodity Procurement Branch, USDA, AMS, F&V, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Room 2546-South, Washington, D.C. 20250-0239 (Fax: 202-720-2782).

Two DEBES Internet sites will be available to vendors - Practice and Production. The **Practice** site (<https://pcsd.usda.gov:3050/mdbc1000.exe?>) consists of sample invitations for vendors to become familiar with the DEBES system. The bid data entered at the Practice site will not be opened by USDA. A practice script has been prepared to help guide vendors through the process of creating, modifying, and submitting bids. The script is available on the Internet under the What's New section (by F&V commodity group) of the Commodity Procurement Home Page at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/cp>. The **Production** site (<http://pcsd.usda.gov/debes> which translates into <https://pcsd.usda.gov:3077/mdbc1000.exe?>) will be used for bid entry for actual Fruit and Vegetable purchases. To access the Web sites, vendors will need an Internet provider and browser (Netscape 4.07 or Internet Explorer 5.00) that uses 128-bit key encryption.

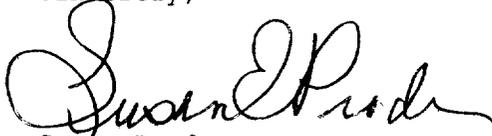


Vendors previously assigned DEBES Logon ID's and passwords for the Practice environment will be added to the DEBES Production environment on October 2, 2000, using the same assigned Logon ID's and passwords. Vendors should change the USDA assigned passwords as soon as possible.

Initially, vendors may wish to fax bids in addition to submitting electronically through DEBES.

Please contact Linda Hinkle (telephone: 202-720-4518) with questions concerning the DEBES system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Proden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" being more prominent than the last name "Proden".

Susan Proden  
Contracting Officer  
Commodity Procurement Branch  
Fruit and Vegetable Programs