



CARPENTER FARMS, INC.

"Growing quality Yakima Valley hops since 1868"

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Docket Clerk
AMS Fruit and Vegetable Programs
Market Order Administration Branch
USDA Mail Stop 0237
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-0201

December 20, 2002

Dear sir or madam:

I am a U.S. hop grower and I fully support the proposed marketing order as a tool to bring stability to our struggling industry. My family has been growing hops for five generations and we are concerned that without the structure and stability that a marketing order will bring our industry will continue to shrink in size and numbers to the detriment of growers, merchants, and especially our customers.

Equity has eroded from our industry at an alarming rate over the past few years. Several years in a row of over production has put us in a position where returns have not covered our costs. Without a tool to manage sales to demand, there is little hope for a healthy American hop industry. And an unhealthy industry is not in the long term best interests of our customers around the world who count on us for high quality American hops.

As an industry, we have committed ourselves to a full year of open, honest discussion and we believe the majority of the industry supports the proposed order. We have had numerous meetings in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon in an attempt to ascertain the will of our industry. It is clear that a majority of growers want a solution that is mandatory, self-regulated, and allows the free market to work within its framework. We believe the proposed hop marketing order provides the best opportunity to achieve these industry goals and urge you to allow us to proceed to hearing as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Stephen B. Carpenter