From: SLOTH9318@aol.com@inter2
Sent: Tuesday, May 30, 2000 10:15 AM
To: DocketClerk, MOAB
Subject: Docket No. FV00-929-2 PR, May 30, 2000 Federal Register, Pp. 34411--34420

Gentlemen:

I am a cranberry grower in Wisconsin with 149 acres of cranberry beds. I support USDA option one for the cranberry set aside: a quota of the best year's crop out of the last 6 plus state average for any new beds (beds that have produced less than 50 bbls/acre to date), with a 29% set aside.

With the huge oversupply of cranberries, something must be done immediately to help growers stay in business. The set aside is the best opportunity to return the market price of cranberries to a level that will allow growers to at least break even this year, after heavy losses on the 1998 crop and projected losses on the 1999 crop (which we have barely started to sell even now). The set aside will not raise prices to the consumer, but will allow growers to avoid the costs of delivering, cleaning, freezing, and storing berries from the 2000 crop that would probably be sold at a loss anyway. The savings may be enough to let us get by until we can create enough market demand for the fruit we are able to grow in the future.

I believe the USDA recommendation for setting the base quantity is the fairest possible, with established growers being able to use the best year of the last 6 (quite possibly their highest yield ever) and new growers with no history and established growers with new beds just coming in to production getting the state crop average from 1997 or the average of the state's best 4 years out of the last 6, whichever is higher. New growers get a fair allotment, established growers get their best crop as their allotment.

The 29% set aside is absolutely necessary, as we will apparently have almost twice as many berries this fall as are actually needed. I am pleased that the USDA is recommending such a strong response to the overwhelming surplus. This is an encouraging example of a program being used exactly as it was intended: to prevent oversupply from unnecessarily bankrupting farmers while at the same time not raising consumer prices. The proposal removes waste and unnecessary expense, it does not limit access to the crop or raise prices.

Sincerely,
Eric Jonjak
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