

Greetings,

My name is Steve Cargil. I am the owner of Cargil Farms Produce in Uvalde, Texas and Cargil Farms JV. We grow, harvest, and package onions in the Winter Garden Region of Texas in both Uvalde and Zavala Counties which are two of the 35 counties under the jurisdiction of Federal Marketing Order 959 or the South Texas Onion Committee.

We have been in the produce business for 75 years and been involved with the South Onion Committee since its inception in 1961. I personally have served on the Onion Committee as Grower or Handler member for 40 years and as Committee Chairman for over the last 20 years. I believe that the time I have served has enabled me great insight as to the workings and vision of this Marketing Order as it moves forward in the future. It has played a vital role in leveling the playing field for growers, shippers and consumers. It brings quality, sizing, packing consistency that consumers and buyers can depend on.

I would like to speak today as both a grower and handler of South Texas onions as to the four proposed amendments to the marketing order.

*Allow acceptance of outside monies (in the form of grants/partner funding)

*Addition of a Public Member to the Committee

*Permit assessment funds to be used for Advertising and Market Promotion

*Reduction of continuation referendum threshold from 67% to 51%

#1) In the ever-changing world it has become imperative to seek and use Federal and State grants and matching monies that are available to both enhance and build our commodity perception, and enhance consumption. Allowing these types funding options would help sustain the South Texas onion industry.

#2) Allowing a public member to our committee would allow better perception on the decisions our committee makes. Especially in areas of nutrition, education, and public health, and to bring an outside the box look to assist growers and handlers in promoting our produce to the public.

#3) Allowing assessment funds to be used for the promotion, advertising, and marketing of South Texas onions is imperative to the sustainability of growing and handling of onions in South Texas, making clear to the consumers the benefits of the first to market US grown onions.

#4) Reduction of continuation threshold would make simple majority vote, this would be simpler, more efficient, and would allow for more clarity in voting, while still promoting the majority of those voting.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today, and to speak to the benefits of the South Texas Onion Committee. It has been a win/win situation for producers and consumers for over 70 years. The changes discussed today will enhance the sustainability of this Marketing Order and those associated with it.