USDA Hearing on Proposals for a California Federal Milk Marketing Order

When and Where is the Hearing?
- Location: Clovis Veterans Memorial District Building, located at 808 Fourth Street, Clovis, CA 93612.
- Days and time: The hearing will start on Sept. 22, 2015, at 9 a.m. and continue on business days until its conclusion, unless otherwise indicated by the judge. It will not convene from Oct. 12 to 13, 2015.
- Note: The hearing will move temporarily from Oct. 22 to 23, 2015, to the Piccadilly Inn Airport Hotel at 5115 E. McKinley Avenue, Fresno, CA 93727.

What Should I Expect?
- The setting is similar to a courtroom, with an Administrative Law Judge presiding.
- Witnesses present data and testimony on the proposals.
- A listen-only audio feed of the hearing will be webcast. The link will be posted online at www.ams.usda.gov/caorder before the hearing begins.
- The hearing may continue for several weeks.
- All testimony and questions are transcribed and published at www.ams.usda.gov/caorder approximately 2 to 3 weeks after the end of each hearing week.

What Happens the First Week?
- During the first stage of the hearing, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) enters documents and data into evidence. Given the volume of material, this may take several days.
  - A USDA witness will present and explain data and analyses requested by the industry.
  - A USDA witness will describe the Preliminary Economic Impact Analysis.
- Once the government witnesses conclude testifying, the judge will begin hearing testimony from proponents on their proposals. The order of testimony may follow the order listed in the Tentative Hearing Schedule.
Under the direction of the judge, the hearing will continue until all of the evidence and testimony is presented.

A complete record is needed to develop program recommendations.

After the hearing is complete, the Administrative Law Judge will request transcript corrections and post-hearing briefs.

USDA issues a Recommended Decision based on the evidence presented during the rulemaking and requests public input.

USDA issues a Final Decision. If a Federal Milk Marketing Order is recommended, dairy farmers potentially covered by the Order vote on whether to adopt it. A “yes” vote by more than two-thirds of the dairy farmers or dairy farmers representing two-thirds of the milk produced is needed to approve the order.

The hearing is open to the public. All interested persons are welcome to attend and participate.

USDA plans to issue periodic updates to alert interested parties of the hearing’s progression. Updates will be posted online at www.ams.usda.gov/caorder and tweeted via the Twitter feed of USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service: @USDA_AMS.

To participate, you must be physically present at the hearing.

Upon arrival at the hearing site, please inform USDA staff you wish to testify. The judge will try to accommodate you.

Dairy farmers will be given priority to testify. If you wish to schedule a specific day and time to testify, USDA will make every effort to accommodate your request.

All witnesses are sworn in by the judge, and all testimony is given under oath or affirmation.

All witnesses are subject to cross-examination by anyone in attendance in connection with their testimony.

You may ask any witness questions about his or her testimony. When prompted by the judge, approach the microphone and identify yourself.