

information consistent with merit system principles and the "Uniformed Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures."

(B) Boards will categorize employees into specific levels of candidates to generate referral lists of ranked candidates for occupational groups. These referral lists are valid for one year from the date generated. Selection from the referral list should be further justified based on specific job-related factors unique to the actual vacancy.

(C) Boards, which should be comprised of senior level managers (subject matter experts for each particular occupational group), may be convened on an ad hoc basis or may be held annually in conjunction with the performance evaluation process.

(ii) *Alternate certification.* A selecting official may make a by-name request for an individual from any appropriate source of Department or Component employees. The employee may be selected if ranked within the highest quality group as determined by rating factors established for the position.

(iii) *Exceptional performance promotion.* (A) An employee whose most recent rating of record is a Level 5 performance rating may be promoted to a vacant position in a higher pay band when the vacant position has the same occupational series (or related interdisciplinary/interoccupational series) and similar function as the position the employee held at the time he or she received the Level 5 rating.

(B) Selecting officials must determine and document the area of consideration, and must consider all employees in the area of consideration whose current Level 5 rating was based on performance in the same occupational series and similar function as the vacancy being filled.

(9) *Grievances.* Employees have the right to file a complaint relating to a promotion action. Such complaints will be resolved under appropriate grievance procedures. The standards for adjudicating complaints are set forth in 5 CFR part 300, subpart A. There is no right of appeal to OPM, but OPM may conduct investigations of substantial violations of OPM requirements.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

7 CFR Part 1487

RIN 0551-AA71

Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops

AGENCY: Foreign Agricultural Service and Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: This proposed rule would amend the regulations used to administer the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) program by increasing the amount of funding per proposal to \$500,000 in a given year, extending the allowable length of an activity to 5 years; and by allowing up to five approved projects for any one TASC participant at any given time.

DATES: Comments concerning this proposed rule must be received by January 2, 2009 to be assured consideration.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

- *E-Mail:* ppsadmin@fas.usda.gov.

- *Fax:* (202) 720-9361.

- *Hand Delivery or Courier:* U.S.

Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Program Policy Staff, Portals Office Building, Suite 400, 1250 Maryland Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20024.

- *U.S. Postal Delivery:* U.S.

Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Program Policy Staff, Stop 1023, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1042.

Comments may be inspected in Suite 400, Portals Building, 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. A copy of this proposed rule is available through the FAS home page at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/programs/TASC.asp>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mark Slupek at (202) 720-4327, fax at (202) 720-9361, or by e-mail at: ppsadmin@fas.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

This proposed rule changes three existing TASC limitations. First, it increases the funding cap on individual

proposals from \$250,000 to \$500,000 per year. Second, it increases the maximum duration of an activity from 3 years to 5 years. Finally, it increases the number of approved projects from three to five that a TASC participant can have underway at any given time. These changes are consistent with the Administration's position regarding the TASC program.

Executive Order 12866

This proposed rule is issued in conformance with Executive Order 12866. It has been determined to be not significant for the purposes of Executive Order 12866 and was reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). A cost-benefit assessment of this rule was not completed.

Executive Order 12988

This rule has been reviewed in accordance with Executive Order 12988. This rule would preempt State laws to the extent such laws are inconsistent with it. This rule would not be retroactive.

Executive Order 12372

This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. See the notice related to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V, published at 48 FR 29115 (June 24, 1983).

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act does not apply to this rule because FAS is not required by 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law to publish a notice of proposed rulemaking with respect to the subject matter of this rule.

Environmental Assessment

FAS has determined that this proposed rule does not constitute a major State or Federal action that would significantly affect the human or natural environment consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 40 CFR part 1502.4, Major Federal actions requiring the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements, and Compliance with NEPA implementing the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality, 40 CFR parts 1500-1508. Therefore, no environmental assessment or environmental impact statement will be prepared.

Unfunded Mandates

Although CCC is publishing this as a proposed rule, Title II of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA) does not apply to this rule. CCC is not

required by 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law to publish a notice of proposed rulemaking for the subject of this rule. Further, this rule contains no unfunded mandates as defined in sections 202 and 205 of UMRA. Nor does this rule potentially affect small governments or contain significant Federal intergovernmental mandates.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, FAS has previously received approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) with respect to the information collection required to support this program. The information collection is described below:

Title: Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops.

OMB Control Number: 0551-0038.

E-Government Act Compliance

FAS is committed to complying with the E-Government Act, to promote the use of the Internet and other information technologies to provide increased opportunities for citizen access to Government information and services, and for other purposes. The forms, regulations, and other information collection activities required to be utilized by a person subject to this rule are available at <http://www.fas.usda.gov>.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 1487

Agricultural commodities, Exports, Specialty crops.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, under the authority of 5 U.S.C. 553; 15 U.S.C. 714b and 714c, 7 CFR part 1487 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 1487—TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIALTY CROPS

1. The authority citation for part 1487 continues to read as follows:

Authority: Section 3205 of Public Law 107-171.

2. Revise § 1487.4 to read as follows:

§ 1487.4 Are there any limits on the scope of proposals?

(a) *Funding cap.* TASC proposals which request more than \$500,000 of CCC funding in a given year will not be considered.

(b) *Length of activities.* Funding will not be provided for projects that have received TASC funding for five years. The five years do not need to be consecutive.

(c) *Target countries.* Proposals may target all export markets, including

single countries or reasonable regional groupings of countries.

(d) *Multiple proposals.* Applicants may submit multiple proposals, but no TASC participant may have more than five approved projects underway at any given time.

3. Amend § 1487.6 by revising paragraph (b) to read as follows:

§ 1487.6 What are the criteria for evaluating proposals?

* * * * *

(b) *Evaluation process.* FAS will review all proposals for eligibility and completeness, and will evaluate each proposal against the factors described in paragraph (a) of this section. The purpose of this review is to identify meritorious proposals, recommend an appropriate funding level for each proposal, and submit the proposals and funding recommendations to appropriate officials within FAS for decision. FAS may, when appropriate to the subject matter of the proposal, request the assistance of other U.S. government experts in evaluating the merits of a proposal.

4. Amend § 1487.8 by revising paragraph (a)(4) to read as follows:

§ 1487.8 How are payments made?

(a) * * *

(4) Participants shall maintain all records and documents relating to TASC projects, including the original documentation which supports reimbursement claims, for a period of three calendar years following the expiration or termination date of the program agreement. Such records and documents will be subject to verification by FAS and shall be made available upon request to authorized officials of the U.S. Government. FAS may deny a claim for reimbursement if the claim is not supported by acceptable documentation.

* * * * *

Dated: November 19, 2008.

Michael W. Yost,

Executive Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation, and Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2008-1267; Directorate Identifier 2008-CE-069-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Viking Air Limited Models DHC-6-1, DHC-6-100, DHC-6-200, and DHC-6-300 Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for the products listed above that would supersede an existing AD. This proposed AD results from mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) originated by an aviation authority of another country to identify and correct an unsafe condition on an aviation product. The MCAI describes the unsafe condition as:

There have been reports of inter-rivet cracking on several wing front spar adapter assemblies (P/N C6WM1027-1) on the horizontal and vertical flanges. It was determined that the cracking was caused by stress corrosion in the short transverse grain initiated by local riveting induced stresses.

The proposed AD would require actions that are intended to address the unsafe condition described in the MCAI.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by January 2, 2009.

ADDRESSES: You may send comments by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- *Fax:* (202) 493-2251.

- *Mail:* U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590.

- *Hand Delivery:* U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov>; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD