

April 17, 2012

**REFERENDUM TO CONSIDER MAJOR AMENDMENTS TO
THE CALIFORNIA CANTALOUPE PROGRAM**

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) conducted a public hearing on March 8 and 12, 2012 to receive testimony and evidence regarding proposed amendments to the state marketing order entitled the California Cantaloupe Program. Based on its analysis of the hearing record, CDFA has decided to move forward with the second phase of the implementation process which is issuing the proposed amendments for votes of affected handlers of California cantaloupes.

The major amendments proposed by the Cantaloupe Board fall into following four categories:

- To expand the scope of the Cantaloupe Program to all handlers of cantaloupes within the state of California.
- To change the total number of board members and alternate members from seven to ten and to revise the district representation and at-large members accordingly.
- To establish and enforce cantaloupe-specific best agricultural practices and create a certification and/or service mark for use by handlers that comply with these best practices.
- To provide procedures for mandatory audits to verify compliance with best practices and disciplinary measures should a handler be found to be out of compliance with best practices.

A copy of the marketing order with the proposed amendments is enclosed.

The program as amended would be administered by an advisory board made up of ten cantaloupe handlers and their alternates. Nominations for the board were taken at the public hearing in case the major amendments become effective.

The funds for administering the amended marketing program would be generated by industry assessments. If implemented, CDFA would conduct a public hearing among cantaloupe handlers at least every five years to determine whether the cantaloupe industry wanted the program to continue.



Cantaloupe Referendum Notice

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The proposed amendments cannot go into effect without first being approved by handlers in industry votes conducted by CDFA. Specifically, there is a referendum for the handlers currently regulated by the program (San Joaquin Valley handlers) and a referendum for handlers in the area not currently covered by the marketing order (desert handlers). The proposed amendments will only go into effect if approved in both referenda.

In order for the Program to become effective both of the following must occur:

1. Forty percent of the total number of firms on each list must vote, **and**
2. Of those voting 65 percent by number, representing 51 percent of the volume voted must be in favor, **or**

Fifty-one percent of those voting who represent 65 percent of the volume voted must be in favor.

A referendum ballot and a self-addressed return envelope are enclosed for your use.

Please note that depending upon your business status, you may receive two handler ballots via separate mailings regarding the proposed amendments. If you handle cantaloupes that are currently affected by the marketing order and also handle cantaloupes that are not currently affected you will receive two ballots. Please complete your ballot(s) and return it/them to the Marketing Branch in the return envelope(s) provided. In order for any individual ballot to be valid, it must be received by this office or postmarked **no later than May 7, 2012.**

This notice is also available at <http://it.cdfa.ca.gov/igov/postings/industry notices>.

The results of the referendum will be announced following ballot tabulation. Individual votes will be kept confidential. If you know of any handlers who did not receive ballots and should have, please contact the Marketing Branch. If you have any questions regarding this vote or the proposed amendments, please contact Glenn Yost at this office.

Sincerely,



Robert Maxie, Chief
Marketing Branch

Enclosures