

USDA Seeks Comments to Amend Soybean Request

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking comments on proposed amendments to procedures for soybean producers to request a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act. USDA also announces the Request for Referendum will be held May 5, 2014, through May 30, 2014, in county USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices.

The Act requires that a request for referendum be held every five years following the initial referendum. The previous request for referendum was held in 2009. Only eligible soybean producers wishing to request a referendum on the Order participate. Those producers who do not want a referendum on the Order would not participate. Participating in the request of referendum is voluntary. Eligible producers participating in the request for referendum must certify that they or the entity they are authorized to represent paid an assessment at some time during January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2013. USDA would conduct a referendum only if at least 10 percent of all eligible soybean producers, no more than one-fifth of which may be soybean producers in any one state, requested a referendum.

This action would amend the procedures to request a referendum by removing the specific number of producers eligible to request a referendum. The number of producers eligible to request a referendum would be replaced with language that allows the Secretary of Agriculture to update this number based on information provided by FSA. For the purposes of the 2014 Soybean Request for Referendum, the number of eligible soybean producers identified through FSA soybean acreage reports for crop years 2011 and 2012 is 569,998. Additionally, this rule would replace specific USDA and FSA Web site and office addresses with more flexible language.

The 70-member United Soybean Board, authorized by the Act, administers a coordinated soybean promotion and research program designed to expand uses of soybeans and soybean products in domestic and foreign markets.

To request a referendum, please contact your local FSA office before May 30, 2014. Eligible persons may obtain a form in person, by mail, FAX, or telephone.