



# PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT



## AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

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AMS No. 170-10

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### USDA Sets Dates For Referendum On Egg Research and Promotion Assessment Increase

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10, 2010 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that it will conduct a referendum Oct. 29 through Nov. 19, 2010, for eligible egg producers to vote on an amendment to increase the assessment rate under the Egg Research and Promotion Order. The amendment would increase the assessment rate from 10 cents to 15 cents per 30-dozen case of commercial eggs.

Egg producers in the 48 states are currently subjected to the provisions of the order and are required to pay assessments used by the American Egg Board to finance promotion, research and consumer information programs. These programs are designed to increase consumer demand for eggs in domestic and foreign markets.

“Programs like the American Egg Board offer farmers and others in the marketing chain a unique opportunity to pool their funds and carry out activities and research that benefit the entire industry,” said AMS Administrator Rayne Pegg. “This referendum allows egg farmers to determine collectively the level of funding available to the Board, and it is important that they make their voices heard by casting a vote.”

To become effective, the assessment increase must be approved by two-thirds of the producers voting in the referendum or by a majority of voters if they represent at least two-thirds of the commercial eggs produced by voters. Producers with flocks of 75,000 or fewer hens are eligible for an assessment exemption.

USDA will mail ballots to all eligible producers beginning Oct. 25, 2010. Ballots must be received by Nov. 19, 2010. If the increase is adopted, egg producers will pay mandatory, nonrefundable assessments of 15 cents per 30-dozen case of commercial eggs to the board. Details of the proposed assessment increase and notice of referendum are posted electronically at [www.ams.usda.gov/PYRulesandNoticesProposed](http://www.ams.usda.gov/PYRulesandNoticesProposed) and [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

In a separate and concurrent *Federal Register* notice, USDA also announced a Final Rule to revise the Egg Research and Promotion Order to establish referendum procedures. These procedures will be used for upcoming and subsequent referendums and are posted electronically at [www.ams.usda.gov/PYRulesandNoticesProposed](http://www.ams.usda.gov/PYRulesandNoticesProposed) and [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Eligible producers who do not receive a ballot should contact Angie Snyder, Research and Promotion; Standards, Promotion & Technology Branch; Poultry Programs, AMS, USDA; 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 3932-S, Stop 0256; Washington, D.C. 20250-0259; by calling (202) 720-4476; or by e-mail at [Angie.Snyder@ams.usda.gov](mailto:Angie.Snyder@ams.usda.gov).

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