

§ 780.128

is further discussed in §§ 780.210 through 780.214.

PRACTICES EXEMPT UNDER “SECONDARY” MEANING OF AGRICULTURE GENERALLY

§ 780.128 General statement on “secondary” agriculture.

The discussion in §§ 780.106 through 780.127 relates to the direct farming operations which come within the “primary” meaning of the definition of “agriculture.” As defined in section 3(f) “agriculture” includes not only the farming activities described in the “primary” meaning but also includes, in its “secondary” meaning, “any practices (including any forestry or lumbering operations) performed by a farmer or on a farm as an incident to or in conjunction with such farming operations, including preparation for market delivery to storage or to market or to carriers for transportation to market.” The legislative history makes it plain that this language was particularly included to make certain that independent contractors such as threshers of wheat, who travel around from farm to farm to assist farmers in what is recognized as a purely agricultural task and also to assist a farmer in getting his agricultural goods to market in their raw or natural state, should be included within the definition of agricultural employees (see *Bowie v. Gonzalez*, 117 F. 2d 11; 81 Cong. Rec. 7876, 7888).

§ 780.129 Required relationship of practices to farming operations.

To come within this secondary meaning, a practice must be performed either by a farmer or on a farm. It must also be performed either in connection with the farmer’s own farming operations or in connection with farming operations conducted on the farm where the practice is performed. In addition, the practice must be performed “as an incident to or in conjunction with” the farming operations. No matter how closely related it may be to farming operations, a practice performed neither by a farmer nor on a farm is not within the scope of the “secondary” meaning of “agriculture.” Thus, employees employed by commission brokers in the typical activities

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conducted at their establishments, warehouse employees at the typical tobacco warehouses, shop employees of an employer engaged in the business of servicing machinery and equipment for farmers, plant employees of a company dealing in eggs or poultry produced by others, employees of an irrigation company engaged in the general distribution of water to farmers, and other employees similarly situated do not generally come within the secondary meaning of “agriculture.” The inclusion of industrial operations is not within the intent of the definition in section 3(f), nor are processes that are more akin to manufacturing than to agriculture (see *Bowie v. Gonzalez*, 117 F. 2d 11; *Fleming v. Hawkeye Pearl Button Co.*, 113 F. 2d 52; *Holtville Alfalfa Mills v. Wyatt*, 230 F. 2d 398; *Maneja v. Waialua*, 349 U.S. 254; *Mitchell v. Budd*, 350 U.S. 473).

PRACTICES PERFORMED “BY A FARMER”

§ 780.130 Performance “by a farmer” generally.

Among other things, a practice must be performed by a farmer or on a farm in order to come within the secondary portion of the definition of “agriculture.” No precise lines can be drawn which will serve to delimit the term “farmer” in all cases. Essentially, however, the term is an occupational title and the employer must be engaged in activities of a type and to the extent that the person ordinarily regarded as a “farmer” is engaged in order to qualify for the title. If this test is met, it is immaterial for what purpose he engages in farming or whether farming is his sole occupation. Thus, an employer’s status as a “farmer” is not altered by the fact that his only purpose is to obtain products useful to him in a non-farming enterprise which he conducts. For example, an employer engaged in raising nursery stock is a “farmer” for purposes of section 3(f) even though his purpose is to supply goods for a separate establishment where he engages in the retail distribution of nursery products. The term “farmer” as used in section 3(f) is not confined to individual persons. Thus an association, a partnership, or a corporation which engages in actual farming operations

may be a “farmer” (see *Mitchell v. Budd*, 350 U.S. 473). This is so even where it operates “what might be called the agricultural analogue of the modern industrial assembly line” (*Maneja v. Waialua*, 349 U.S. 254).

§ 780.131 Operations which constitute one a “farmer.”

Generally, an employer must undertake farming operations of such scope and significance as to constitute a distinct activity, for the purpose of yielding a farm product, in order to be regarded as a “farmer.” It does not necessarily follow, however, that any employer is a “farmer” simply because he engages in some actual farming operations of the type specified in section 3(f). Thus, one who merely harvests a crop of agricultural commodities is not a “farmer” although his employees who actually do the harvesting are employed in “agriculture” in those weeks when exclusively so engaged. As a general rule, a farmer performs his farming operations on land owned, leased, or controlled by him and devoted to his own use. The mere fact, therefore, that an employer harvests a growing crop, even under a partnership agreement pursuant to which he provides credit, advisory or other services, is not generally considered to be sufficient to qualify the employer so engaged as a “farmer.” Such an employer would stand, in packing or handling the product, in the same relationship to the produce as if it were from the fields or groves of an independent grower. One who engaged merely in practices which are incidental to farming is not a “farmer.” For example, a company which merely prepares for market, sells, and ships flowers and plants grown and cultivated on farms by affiliated corporations is not a “farmer.” The fact that one has suspended actual farming operations during a period in which he performs only practices incidental to his part or prospective farming operations does not, however, preclude him from qualifying as a “farmer.” One otherwise qualified as a farmer does not lose his status as such because he performs farming operations on land which he does not own or control, as in the case of a cattleman using public lands for grazing.

§ 780.132 Operations must be performed “by” a farmer.

“Farmer” includes the employees of a farmer. It does not include an employer merely because he employs a farmer or appoints a farmer as his agent to do the actual work. Thus, the stripping of tobacco, i.e., removing leaves from the stalk, by the employees of an independent warehouse is not a practice performed “by a farmer” even though the warehouse acts as agent for the tobacco farmer or employs the farmer in the stripping operations. One who merely performs services or supplies materials for farmers in return for compensation in money or farm products is not a “farmer.” Thus, a person who provides credit and management services to farmers cannot qualify as a “farmer” on that account. Neither can a repairman who repairs and services farm machinery qualify as a “farmer” on that basis. Where crops are grown under contract with a person who provides a market, contributes counsel and advice, make advances and otherwise assists the grower who actually produces the crop, it is the grower and not the person with whom he contracts who is the farmer with respect to that crop (*Mitchell v. Huntsville Nurseries*, 267 F. 2d 286).

§ 780.133 Farmers’ cooperative as a “farmer.”

(a) The phrase “by a farmer” covers practices performed either by the farmer himself or by the farmer through his employees. Employees of a farmers’ cooperative association, however, are employed not by the individual farmers who compose its membership or who are its stockholders, but by the cooperative association itself. Cooperative associations whether in the corporate form or not, are distinct, separate entities from the farmers who own or compose them. The work performed by a farmers’ cooperative association is not work performed “by a farmer” but for farmers. Therefore, employees of a farmers’ cooperative association are not generally engaged in any practices performed “by a farmer” within the meaning of section 3(f) (*Farmers Reservoir Co. v. McComb*, 337 U.S. 755; *Goldberg v. Crowley Ridge Ass’n.*, 295 F. 2d 7;