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(j) To act as intermediary between the Secretary and any producer, first handler, importer, or exporter;

(k) To furnish to the Secretary any information or records that the Secretary may request;

(l) To receive, investigate, and report to the Secretary complaints of violations of the Order;

(m) To recommend to the Secretary such amendments to the Order as the Council considers appropriate; and

(n) To work to achieve an effective, continuous, and coordinated program of promotion, research, consumer information, evaluation, and industry information designed to strengthen the blueberry industry's position in the marketplace; maintain and expand existing markets and uses for blueberries; and to carry out programs, plans, and projects designed to provide maximum benefits to the blueberry industry.

[65 FR 43963, July 17, 2000, as amended at 66 FR 37119, July 17, 2001]

§ 1218.48 Prohibited activities.

The Council may not engage in, and shall prohibit the employees and agents of the Council from engaging in:

(a) Any action that would be a conflict of interest; and

(b) Using funds collected by the Council under the Order to undertake any action for the purpose of influencing legislation or governmental action or policy, by local, state, national, and foreign governments, other than recommending to the Secretary amendments to the Order.

[65 FR 43963, July 17, 2000, as amended at 66 FR 37119, July 17, 2001]

EXPENSES AND ASSESSMENTS

§ 1218.50 Budget and expenses.

(a) At least 60 days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, and as may be necessary thereafter, the Council shall prepare and submit to the Secretary a budget for the fiscal year covering its anticipated expenses and disbursements in administering this subpart. Each such budget shall include:

(1) A statement of objectives and strategy for each program, plan, or project;

(2) A summary of anticipated revenue, with comparative data or at least

one preceding year (except for the initial budget);

(3) A summary of proposed expenditures for each program, plan, or project; and

(4) Staff and administrative expense breakdowns, with comparative data for at least on preceding year (except for the initial budget).

(b) Each budget shall provide adequate funds to defray its proposed expenditures and to provide for a reserve as set forth in this subpart.

(c) Subject to this section, any amendment or addition to an approved budget must be approved by the Secretary, including shifting funds from one program, plan, or project to another. Shifts of funds which do not cause an increase in the Council's approved budget and which are consistent with governing bylaws need not have prior approval by the Secretary.

(d) The Council is authorized to incur such expenses, including provision for a reasonable reserve, as the Secretary finds are reasonable and likely to be incurred by the Council for its maintenance and functioning, and to enable it to exercise its powers and perform its duties in accordance with the provisions of this subpart. Such expenses shall be paid from funds received by the Council.

(e) With approval of the Secretary, the Council may borrow money for the payment of administrative expenses, subject to the same fiscal, budget, and audit controls as other funds of the Council. Any funds borrowed by the Council shall be expended only for startup costs and capital outlays and are limited to the first year of operation of the Council.

(f) The Council may accept voluntary contributions, but these shall only be used to pay expenses incurred in the conduct of programs, plans, and projects. Such contributions shall be free from any encumbrance by the donor and the Council shall retain complete control of their use.

(g) The Council may also receive funds provided through the Department's Foreign Agricultural Service or from other sources, with the approval of the Secretary, for authorized activities.

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(h) The Council shall reimburse the Secretary for all expenses incurred by the Secretary in the implementation, administration, and supervision of the Order, including all referendum costs in connection with the Order.

(i) The Council may not expend for administration, maintenance, and functioning of the Council in any fiscal year an amount that exceeds 15 percent of the assessments and other income received by the Council for that fiscal year. Reimbursements to the Secretary required under paragraph (h) are excluded from this limitation on spending.

(j) The Council may establish an operating monetary reserve and may carry over to subsequent fiscal periods excess funds in any reserve so established: *Provided* that the funds in the reserve do not exceed one fiscal period's budget. Subject to approval by the Secretary, such reserve funds may be used to defray any expenses authorized under this part.

[65 FR 43963, July 17, 2000, as amended at 66 FR 37119, July 17, 2001]

§ 1218.51 Financial statements.

(a) As requested by the Secretary, the Council shall prepare and submit financial statements to the Secretary on a periodic basis. Each such financial statement shall include, but not be limited to, a balance sheet, income statement, and expense budget. The expense budget shall show expenditures during the time period covered by the report, year-to-date expenditures, and the unexpended budget.

(b) Each financial statement shall be submitted to the Secretary within 30 days after the end of the time period to which it applies.

(c) The Council shall submit annually to the Secretary an annual financial statement within 90 days after the end of the fiscal year to which it applies.

[65 FR 43963, July 17, 2000, as amended at 66 FR 37119, July 17, 2001]

§ 1218.52 Assessments.

(a) The funds to cover the Council's expenses shall be paid from assessments on producers and importers, donations from any person not subject to assessments under this Order, and

other funds available to the Board including those collected pursuant to §1218.56 and subject to the limitations contained therein.

(b) The collection of assessments on domestic blueberries will be the responsibility of the first handler receiving the blueberries. In the case of the producer acting as its own first handler, the producer will be required to collect and remit its individual assessments.

(c) Such assessments shall be levied at a rate of \$12 per ton on all blueberries. The assessment rate will be reviewed, and may be modified with the approval of the Secretary, after the first referendum is conducted as stated in §1218.71(b).

(d) Each importer of fresh and processed blueberries shall pay an assessment to the Council on blueberries imported for marketing in the United States, through the U.S. Customs Service.

(1) The assessment rate for imported fresh and processed blueberries shall be the same or equivalent to the rate for fresh blueberries produced in the United States.

(2) The import assessment shall be uniformly applied to imported fresh and frozen blueberries that are identified by the numbers 0810.40.0028 and 0811.90.2028, respectively, in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States or any other numbers used to identify fresh and frozen blueberries. Assessments on other types of imported processed blueberries, such as dried blueberries, puree, and juice, may be added at the recommendation of the Council with the approval of the Secretary.

(3) The assessments due on imported fresh and processed blueberries shall be paid when they enter or are withdrawn for consumption in the United States.

(e) All assessment payments and reports will be submitted to the office of the Council. All final payments for a crop year are to be received no later than November 30 of that year. A late payment charge shall be imposed on any handler who fails to remit to the Council, the total amount for which any such handler is liable on or before the due date established by the Council. In addition to the late payment