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§ 718.207 Determining allotments, quotas, and bases when reconstitution is made by combination.

When two or more farms or tracts are combined for a year, that year's allotments, quotas, and bases, with respect to the combined farm or tract, as required by applicable commodity regulations, shall not be greater than the sum of the allotments, quotas, and bases for each of the farms or tracts comprising the combination, subject to the provisions of § 718.204.

Subpart D—Equitable Relief From Ineligibility

SOURCE: 67 FR 66307, Oct. 31, 2002, unless otherwise noted.

§ 718.301 Applicability.

(a) This subpart is applicable to programs administered by the Farm Service Agency under chapters VII and XIV of this title, except for an agricultural credit program carried out under the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 *et seq.*). Administration of this subpart shall be under the supervision of the Deputy Administrator, except that such authority shall not limit the exercise of authority allowed State Executive Directors of the Farm Service agency as provided for in § 718.307.

(b) Sections 718.303, 718.304, and 718.307 do not apply where the action for which relief is requested occurred before May 13, 2002. In such cases, authority that was effective prior to May 13, 2002, may be applied.

(c) Section 718.306 does not apply to a function performed under either section 376 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 *et seq.*), or a conservation program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.

§ 718.302 Definitions and abbreviations.

In addition to the definitions provided in § 718.2 of this part, the following terms apply to this subpart:

Agricultural commodity means any agricultural commodity, food, feed, fiber,

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or livestock that is subject to a covered program.

Covered program means a program specified in § 718.301 of this subpart.

FSA means the Farm Service Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture.

OGC means the Office of the General Counsel of the United States Department of Agriculture.

SED means, for activities within a particular state, the State Executive Director of the United States Department of Agriculture, FSA, for that state.

§ 718.303 Reliance on incorrect actions or information.

(a) Notwithstanding any other law, action or inaction by a participant in a covered program that is to the detriment of the participant, and that is based upon good faith reliance on the action or advice of an authorized representative of a County or State FSA Committee, may be approved by the Administrator, FSA or the Executive Vice President, CCC, as applicable, or their designee, as meeting the requirements of the program, and benefits may be extended or payments made in accordance with § 718.305.

(b) This section applies only to a participant who relied upon the action of, or information provided by, a county or State FSA committee or an authorized representative of such committee and the participant acted, or failed to act, as a result of the Agency action or information. This part does not apply to cases where the participant had sufficient reason to know that the action or information upon which they relied was improper or erroneous or where the participant acted in reliance on their own misunderstanding or misinterpretation of program provisions, notices or information.

§ 718.304 Failure to fully comply.

(a) Under a covered program, when the failure of a participant to fully comply with the terms and conditions of a program authorized by this chapter precludes the providing of payments or benefits, relief may be authorized in accordance with § 718.305 if

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the participant made a good faith effort to comply fully with the requirements of the covered program.

(b) This section only applies to participants who are determined by the FSA approval official to have made a good faith effort to comply fully with the terms and conditions of the program and rendered substantial performance.

§ 718.305 Forms of relief.

(a) The Administrator of FSA, Executive Vice President of CCC, or their designee, may authorize a participant in a covered program to:

(1) Retain loans, payments, or other benefits received under the covered program;

(2) Continue to receive loans, payments, and other benefits under the covered program;

(3) Continue to participate, in whole or in part, under any contract executed under the covered program;

(4) In the case of a conservation program, re-enroll all or part of the land covered by the program; and

(5) Receive such other equitable relief as determined to be appropriate.

(b) As a condition of receiving relief under this subpart, the participant may be required to remedy their failure to meet the program requirement, or mitigate its affects.

§ 718.306 Finality.

(a) A determination by a State or county FSA committee made on or after October 13, 1994, becomes final and binding 90 days from the date the application for benefits has been filed, and supporting documentation required to be supplied by the producer as a condition for eligibility for the particular program has been filed, unless one of the following conditions exist:

(1) The participant has requested an administrative review of the determination in accordance with part 780 of this chapter;

(2) The determination was based on misrepresentation, false statement, fraud, or willful misconduct by or on behalf of the participant;

(3) The determination was modified by the Administrator, FSA, or in the case of CCC programs conducted under

Chapter XIV of this title, the Executive Vice President, CCC; or

(4) The participant had reason to know that the determination was erroneous.

(b) Should an erroneous determination become final under the provisions of this section, it shall only be effective through the year in which the error was found and communicated to the participant.

§ 718.307 Special relief approval authority for State Executive Directors.

(a) *General nature of the special authority.* Notwithstanding provisions in this subpart providing supervision and relief authority to other officials, an SED without further review by other officials (other than the Secretary) may grant relief to a participant under the provisions of §§ 718.303 and 718.304 as if the SED were the final arbiter within the agency of such matters so long as:

(1) The program matter with respect to which the relief is sought is a program matter in a covered program which is operated within the State under the control of the SED;

(2) The total amount of relief which will be provided to the person (that is, to the individual or entity that applies for the relief) by that SED under this special authority for errors during that year is less than \$20,000 (including in that calculation, any loan amount or other benefit of any kind payable for that year and any other year);

(3) The total amount of such relief which has been previously provided to the participant using this special authority for errors in that year, as calculated above, is not more than \$5,000;

(4) The total amount of loans, payments, and benefits of any kind for which relief is provided to similarly situated participants by the SED (or the SED's predecessor) for errors for any year under the authority provided in this section, as calculated above, is not more than \$1,000,000.

(b) *Report of the exercise of the power.* A grant of relief shall be considered to be under this section and subject to the special finality provided in this section only if the SED grants the relief in writing when granting the relief to the party who will receive the benefit of