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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Designation for the Arkansas (AR) Area

AGENCY: **Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration**
(GIPSA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: GIPSA announces the designation of Memphis **Grain Inspection Service** (Memphis) to provide official services under the United States **Grain Standards Act**, as amended (Act).

EFFECTIVE DATES: March 1, 1998.

ADDRESSES: USDA, GIPSA, Janet M. Hart, Chief, Review Branch, Compliance Division, STOP 3604, Room 1647-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-3604.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Janet M. Hart, at 202-720-8525.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

This action has been reviewed and determined not to be a rule or regulation as defined in Executive Order 12866 and Departmental Regulation 1512-1; therefore, the Executive Order and Departmental Regulation do not apply to this action.

In the October 1, 1997, Federal Register (62 FR 63513), GIPSA asked persons interested in providing official services in the Little Rock area, formerly assigned to Arkansas **Grain Inspection Service**, to submit an application for designation. Applications were due by October 30, 1997. There were two applicants: Memphis **Grain Inspection Service**, a currently designated official agency, located at Memphis, Tennessee, and contiguous to the Little Rock area, applied for designation to provide official services in the Little Rock area; and the former Arkansas agency reorganized and applied for designation to provide official services in the Little Rock area.

GIPSA requested comments on the applicants for the Arkansas area in the December 1, 1997, Federal Register (62 FR 63513). Comments were due by December 30, 1997. GIPSA received eight written comments by the deadline. Two oral comments in favor of Memphis were also received, one of which expressed concerns about the former Arkansas Agency. Four **grain** companies had been provided official services by the former Arkansas agency and supported designation of Memphis discussing favorably the quality of service received. Memphis has been providing official services in the Little Rock area on an interim basis.

Six commentators supported designation of Arkansas with one comment noting that their support was contingent upon the business being

properly managed and staffed. Others indicated that having an official agency in Little Rock was of concern and expressed concern about timeliness of service. Some of the comments stated that they had received previously excellent services from the Arkansas agency.

GIPSA evaluated all available information regarding the designation criteria in Section 7(f)(1)(A) of the Act and, according to Section 7(f)(1)(B), determined that Memphis is better able to provide official services in the Arkansas geographic area. Effective March 1, 1998, and ending May 31, 2000, concurrent with the termination of their current designation Memphis is designated to provide official services in the geographic area specified in the October 1, 1997, Federal Register.

Interested persons may obtain official services by contacting Memphis at 901-942-3216 or 501-372-5302.

Authority: Pub. L. 94-582, 90 Stat. 2867, as amended (7 U.S.C. 71 et seq.).

Dated: January 23, 1998.

Neil E. Porter,
Director, Compliance Division.
[FR Doc. 98-2121 Filed 1-30-98; 8:45 am]
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