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Title XXXV

AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE, AND ANIMAL
INDUSTRY

Chapter 603

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

CHAPTER 603 FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

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FLORIDA TROPICAL FRUIT POLICY ACT

(ss. 603.201-603.211)

PART I

INSPECTION

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603.011 Fruit and vegetable inspection fees; penalty.—

(1)(a) Each person receiving inspection services pursuant to s. 570.48 shall pay to the department an inspection fee. This fee shall cover the cost of providing the inspection service and shall be set annually by the department by rule.

(b) All fees collected by the department to cover the cost of providing the inspection service for farms or greenhouses growing tomatoes or for tomato packinghouses and repackers shall be deposited into the General Inspection Trust Fund and shall be used for tomato-related inspections, education, and research.

(2) All fees collected by the department under this section shall be deposited into the Citrus Inspection Trust Fund, except that fees collected pursuant to paragraph (1)(b) and s. 570.48(4) shall be deposited in the General Inspection Trust Fund.

(3) The department may terminate inspection services upon a 3-day written notice if inspection fees are not paid.

History.— s. 10, ch. 92-151; s. 26, ch. 93-169; s. 13, ch. 2007-67; s. 90, ch. 2014-150.

Note.— Former s. 570.481.

603.11 Grades of fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, and other agricultural products.—

(1) The standard grades of all fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, and other agricultural products shall be the same as those of the United States grades as now promulgated or which may be promulgated by the United States Department of Agriculture.

(2) The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is authorized to establish by rule Florida grades and Florida sizes on any fruits or vegetables in this state. However, this subsection shall not apply to citrus.

History.—s. 1, ch. 12292, 1927; CGL 2006; s. 1, ch. 67-259; s. 1, ch. 80-12.

603.12 Inspection of fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, and other agricultural products; certificates.— The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, cooperating with the United States Department of Agriculture, shall, when requested by the shipper, furnish carlot inspection of fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, and other agricultural products at shipping point, furnishing certificates in conformity with those used by the United States Department of Agriculture in shipping point inspection. The expense or charge of such inspection shall be paid by the shipper.

History.—s. 2, ch. 12292, 1927; CGL 2007; s. 1, ch. 23677, 1947; s. 2, ch. 67-259; ss. 14, 35, ch. 69-106.

603.13 Fees for inspections.— All fees for inspection performed under the preceding section shall be paid to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services which shall deposit the same in the State Treasury in the General Inspection Trust Fund from which all expenses for inspection services performed and other expenses incurred under the provisions of s. 603.12 shall be paid upon the approval and at the direction of the state department, but the expenditures from the General Inspection Trust Fund for all such expenses shall not exceed the amount of fees charged and collected as authorized and provided by said s. 603.12 of this chapter. Any amount of fees so charged and collected in excess of the requirements for paying all expenses for inspection services shall be held in the State Treasury in the General Inspection Trust Fund, subject to any contract or agreement entered into by and between the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the United States Department of Agriculture for carrying out the provisions of s. 603.12.

History.—s. 3, ch. 12292, 1927; CGL 2008; s. 1, ch. 17948, 1937; s. 2, ch. 23677, 1947; s. 2, ch. 61-119; ss. 14, 35, ch. 69-106.

603.14 Cooperative certificates as evidence.— All such cooperative government certificates shall be accepted as prima facie evidence in the courts of Florida.

History.—s. 4, ch. 12292, 1927; CGL 2009.

603.15 United States inspection certificates as evidence.—

(1) Any inspection certificate issued by any licensed inspector of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, of the United States Department of Agriculture under the laws of the United States or the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States, showing the grade, quality, condition or the size, pack or method of loading for shipment of any agricultural, horticultural or citricultural products shall be received as competent evidence in all proceedings in any of the courts of this state, except when offered in behalf of the state in criminal prosecutions.

(2) Every such certificate when offered in evidence shall be prima facie evidence of the truth of all matters and things set forth therein.

History.—ss. 1, 2, ch. 12056, 1927; CGL 2011; s. 7, ch. 22858, 1945.

603.151 Enforcement of Federal Marketing Agreement Act by state as to certain vegetables.—

(1) During the period of time in each year that tomatoes, cucumbers, avocados, or limes are subject to any regulations issued by the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States pursuant to an order issued by said Secretary of Agriculture under the authority and provisions of the Act of Congress known as the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended, (48 Stat. s. 1, as amended; 7 U.S.C. ss. 601 et seq.), it shall be unlawful for any producer, shipper, forwarding company, private carrier, or common carrier, to ship or transport outside the production area defined in said regulations and order of the Secretary of Agriculture, any lot or cargo of tomatoes, cucumbers, avocados or limes subject to the provisions of any such existing regulations, unless the same has been inspected by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, or its authorized inspectors or agents, and a certificate of such inspection obtained.

(2) Failure to have at all times a copy of such inspection certificate present with such lot or cargo of tomatoes, cucumbers, avocados or limes being shipped or transported outside the production area as defined in said regulations or order of the Secretary of Agriculture, shall be prima facie evidence of violation of the provisions of subsection (1).

(3) The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is hereby authorized to make such rules, regulations, and orders as may be necessary to carry out the provisions and intent of this section, and such rules, regulations, and

orders issued by the department shall have the force and effect of law when not inconsistent therewith.

(4) Whoever violates the provisions of subsection (1) shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

History.—ss. 1, 2, 3, 4, chs. 59-501, 59-502, 59-503; ss. 14, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 630, ch. 71-136.

603.152 Maturity standard for limes; applicability; testing of limes; rules and regulations.— The provisions of this section shall be applicable and effective only in the event that there shall cease to be a federal marketing agreement as referred to in s. 603.151. In such event, the following shall be applicable:

(1) As used in this section, the word “limes” shall mean and include limes of all varieties and clones of acid limes grown in the state classified botanically as *Citrus aurantifolia* (Christm.) Swingle and includes the group known as large fruited limes (Tahiti, Persian, Bearss, Pond, Idemor).

(2) Limes shall be deemed to be mature only when clipped or picked, or otherwise severed from the tree and the limes in each lot have been found by inspection as herein provided to contain an average of 42 percent juice content by volume, and no limes in any such lot shall contain less than 38 percent juice content by volume and measure at least $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches in diameter when measured on a line perpendicular to a line running from the stem end to the blossom end, except from March 15 to May 1 of each year, during which latter period of time, limes shall measure at least $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches along the said diameter.

(3) The tests of the juice content of limes hereunder shall be based upon the average maximum amount of liquid contents which can be extracted from the flesh and pulp of not less than 10 average individual specimens of said limes of any lot of limes. The testing of the juice content of limes on a percentage basis by volume shall be the total maximum amount of liquid contents of the limes being tested when determined by the percentage of such juice contents as compared to the total volume displacement of said limes before the juice is extracted. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall, by proper rules and regulations, be authorized to prescribe the manner, method, cost and expense of drawing of said samples and of conducting said tests. In the making of such tests, the juice of the limes being tested shall not be strained through a cloth or other strainer but shall be considered for testing as said juice comes from the juice extractor. The juice extractor used shall be any suitable mechanical device or fruit press used for extracting juice, such type or kind of extractor or fruit press to be determined and approved by the department.

(4) Any limes not conforming to the standards, as set forth herein, shall be deemed and held to be immature and shall be destroyed under the supervision of an inspector; provided however, that limes meeting the juice content requirements but not meeting the size requirements as set forth in subsection (2) above may be diverted directly to a processing plant under the supervision of an inspector; provided further that in event of an emergency such as a freeze or hurricane the department, at its own discretion, may waive size requirements only.

(5) It shall be unlawful for any producer, shipper, forwarding company, private carrier, or common carrier, to sell, ship or transport limes, unless the same has been inspected by the department, or its authorized inspectors or agents, and a certificate of such inspection obtained.

(6) Failure to have at all times a copy of such inspection certificate present with such a lot or cargo of limes being shipped shall be prima facie evidence of violation of the provisions of this act.

(7) The department is hereby authorized to make such rules, regulations, and orders as may be necessary to carry out the provisions and intent of this section, and such rules, regulations, and orders issued by the department shall have the force and effect of law when not inconsistent therewith.

(8) Whoever violates the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

History.—s. 1, ch. 61-437; s. 1, ch. 65-169; ss. 14, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 631, ch. 71-136.

603.161 Sales certificates, work orders to accompany certain fruit.—

(1) This section applies to tropical or subtropical fruit. “Tropical or subtropical fruit” means avocados, bananas, calamondins, carambolas, guavas, kumquats, limes, longans, loquats, lychees, mameys, mangoes, papayas, passion

fruit, sapodillas, and fruit that must be grown in tropical or semitropical regions, except citrus fruit as defined in s. 601.03.

(2) Every purchaser of more than one bushel or crate of tropical or semitropical fruit at the point of growth shall obtain a sales certificate from the grower who shall prepare and furnish such certificates. The sales certificate shall accompany the fruit from the point of growth to the final processor or wholesaler who will offer for retail sale and such processor or wholesaler shall keep the sales certificate for inspection upon request by a peace officer for 1 year from date of purchase.

(3) The sales certificate shall indicate the name, address and telephone number of the grower from whom the fruit was purchased; the species, variety and amount purchased; and for the purchaser and each subsequent purchaser, her or his name, address and telephone number, date of purchase and driver license number; if the fruit is transported by other than the owner, the name of the transporting company and the make, type and license number of the vehicle transporting the fruit. The grower shall keep a copy of the sales certificate for 1 year from date of the purchase. The Commissioner of Agriculture, according to requirements of this section, shall prescribe the form of sales certificates.

(4) All firms or individuals transporting fruit for handlers, packinghouses or processors shall obtain a work order from the dispatcher of the named organizations which must remain in the possession of the driver to the point of pickup and thereafter with the fruit until delivered. The form of the work order shall be prescribed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and shall indicate the name of firm or individual transporting fruit, date, grove destination, time for pickup, truck number, number of crates, variety of fruit, name of packinghouse or other place where fruit is to be delivered, driver's name, driver license number and the name of the truck dispatcher.

(5) Violation of the provisions of this section shall constitute a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

History.—ss. 1, 2, ch. 67-494; s. 830, ch. 71-136; s. 3, ch. 72-252; s. 990, ch. 97-103; s. 2, ch. 98-123; s. 76, ch. 2012-182.

Note.—Former s. 811.271.

PART II

FLORIDA TROPICAL FRUIT POLICY ACT

603.201 Short title.

603.202 Legislative declarations and findings.

603.203 Tropical Fruit Advisory Council.

603.204 South Florida Tropical Fruit Plan.

603.211 Identification of sellers or handlers of tropical or subtropical fruit and vegetables; containers specified; penalties.

603.201 Short title.— This act may be cited as the “Florida Tropical Fruit Policy Act.”

History.—ss. 1, 5, ch. 90-277; s. 45, ch. 91-201; s. 5, ch. 91-429.

603.202 Legislative declarations and findings.—

(1) The Legislature declares that the production and utilization of tropical fruits is an underdeveloped agricultural commodity enterprise in this state. The Legislature recognizes that Florida possesses many resources and geographic advantages, particularly a marine subtropical climate, that favor the expansion and growth of present-day tropical fruits into a broad-based industry. The growth potential of the present industry offers good opportunities for local economic development and supply trade. Development of tropical fruits is compatible with the economies, lifestyles, and interests of both rural and urban Florida.

(2) Further, the Legislature finds that factors, such as minimal new tropical fruit cultivar development, lack of printed production and processing information, minimal understanding of tropical fruit processing requirements, lack of fresh fruit handling and processing technology, lack of quality standards for fresh fruit, lack of assistance and printed information for overall business planning and marketing, and lack of coordination of the many diverse interests and expertise which could contribute to the further development of tropical fruit in the state are inhibitory to the future development of the tropical fruit industry.