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**PISTACHIO INDUSTRY REFERENDUM TO EXPAND
FEDERAL MARKETING ORDER PASSES BY WIDE MARGIN**

Fresno, Calif. September 28, 2009 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the results of a producer referendum to amend the Federal Marketing Order regulating pistachios grown in California. Several amendments were proposed by the Administrative Committee for Pistachios (ACP), which is responsible for local administration of the Order.

The Western Pistachio Association (WPA) has worked with the ACP and other industry entities to expand the current Order to other states outside California that produce pistachios. Brian Blackwell, WPA Governmental Affairs Chair, stated he is very pleased the referendum passed. "This enables the entire U.S. pistachio industry to move forward collectively and tackle issues that the industry was not able to address previously. The entire industry should be applauded for its support of a program that will accomplish a number key industry issues, such as food safety, quality regulations and needed research projects."

All of the amendments passed by at least 94 percent of the producers voting, and by at least 96 percent of the volume represented in the referendum. For the amendments to pass, at least two-thirds of the producers voting in the referendum or producers representing two-thirds of the volume of pistachios voted in the referendum, needed to vote in favor of the amendments.

When implemented, these amendments will:

- Expand the production area covered under the Order to include Arizona and New Mexico;
- Authorize the ACP to reimburse handlers for a portion of their inspection and certification costs in certain situations;
- Authorize the ACP to recommend research projects;
- Modify existing Order authorities concerning aflatoxin and quality regulations;
- Modify the authority for interhandler transfers of Order obligations; and
- Implement other related and administrative changes.

The referendum was held Aug. 10-22, 2009. In order to be eligible to vote, a producer must have produced pistachios during the representative period of Sept. 1, 2008, through July 31, 2009.

Notice of the referendum was published in the Aug. 6, 2009, Federal Register. The amendments will become effective after a final rule is issued in the Federal Register, which is expected within the next month.

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