

## CHAPTER 56—UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES AFFECTING PRODUCERS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

- Sec.  
2301. Congressional findings and declaration of policy.  
2302. Definitions.  
2303. Prohibited practices.  
2304. Disclaimer of intention to prohibit normal dealing.  
2305. Enforcement provisions.  
    (a) Civil actions by persons aggrieved; preventive relief; attorneys' fees; security.  
    (b) Civil actions by Attorney General; Federal jurisdiction; complaint; preventive relief.  
    (c) Suits by persons injured; Federal jurisdiction; amount of recovery; attorneys' fees; limitation of actions.  
    (d) Federal jurisdiction; exhaustion of other remedies; State laws and jurisdiction unaffected.  
2306. Separability.

### § 2301. Congressional findings and declaration of policy

Agricultural products are produced in the United States by many individual farmers and ranchers scattered throughout the various States of the Nation. Such products in fresh or processed form move in large part in the channels of interstate and foreign commerce, and such products which do not move in these channels directly burden or affect interstate commerce. The efficient production and marketing of agricultural products by farmers and ranchers is of vital concern to their welfare and to the general economy of the Nation. Because agricultural products are produced by numerous individual farmers, the marketing and bargaining position of individual farmers will be adversely affected unless they are free to join together voluntarily in cooperative organizations as authorized by law. Interference with this right is contrary to the public interest and adversely affects the free and orderly flow of goods in interstate and foreign commerce.

It is, therefore, declared to be the policy of Congress and the purpose of this chapter to establish standards of fair practices required of handlers in their dealings in agricultural products.

(Pub. L. 90-288, § 2, Apr. 16, 1968, 82 Stat. 93.)

#### SHORT TITLE

Section 1 of Pub. L. 90-288 provided that: "This Act [enacting this chapter] shall be known as the 'Agricultural Fair Practices Act of 1967'."

### § 2302. Definitions

When used in this chapter—

(a) The term "handler" means any person engaged in the business or practice of (1) acquiring agricultural products from producers or associations of producers for processing or sale; or (2) grading, packaging, handling, storing, or processing agricultural products received from producers or associations of producers; or (3) contracting or negotiating contracts or other arrangements, written or oral, with or on behalf of producers or associations of producers with re-

spect to the production or marketing of any agricultural product; or (4) acting as an agent or broker for a handler in the performance of any function or act specified in clause (1), (2), or (3) of this paragraph.

(b) The term "producer" means a person engaged in the production of agricultural products as a farmer, planter, rancher, dairyman, fruit, vegetable, or nut grower.

(c) The term "association of producers" means any association of producers of agricultural products engaged in marketing, bargaining, shipping, or processing as defined in section 1141j(a) of title 12, or in section 291 of this title.

(d) The term "person" includes individuals, partnerships, corporations, and associations.

(e) The term "agricultural products" shall not include cotton or tobacco or their products.

(Pub. L. 90-288, § 3, Apr. 16, 1968, 82 Stat. 94.)

### § 2303. Prohibited practices

It shall be unlawful for any handler knowingly to engage or permit any employee or agent to engage in the following practices:

(a) To coerce any producer in the exercise of his right to join and belong to or to refrain from joining or belonging to an association of producers, or to refuse to deal with any producer because of the exercise of his right to join and belong to such an association; or

(b) To discriminate against any producer with respect to price, quantity, quality, or other terms of purchase, acquisition, or other handling of agricultural products because of his membership in or contract with an association of producers; or

(c) To coerce or intimidate any producer to enter into, maintain, breach, cancel, or terminate a membership agreement or marketing contract with an association of producers or a contract with a handler; or

(d) To pay or loan money, give any thing of value, or offer any other inducement or reward to a producer for refusing to or ceasing to belong to an association of producers; or

(e) To make false reports about the finances, management, or activities of associations of producers or handlers; or

(f) To conspire, combine, agree, or arrange with any other person to do, or aid or abet the doing of, any act made unlawful by this chapter.

(Pub. L. 90-288, § 4, Apr. 16, 1968, 82 Stat. 94.)

#### SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 2305 of this title.

### § 2304. Disclaimer of intention to prohibit normal dealing

Nothing in this chapter shall prevent handlers and producers from selecting their customers and suppliers for any reason other than a producer's membership in or contract with an association of producers, nor require a handler to deal with an association of producers.

(Pub. L. 90-288, § 5, Apr. 16, 1968, 82 Stat. 95.)

### § 2305. Enforcement provisions

#### (a) Civil actions by persons aggrieved; preventive relief; attorneys' fees; security

Whenever any handler has engaged or there are reasonable grounds to believe that any han-