COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 305/2004

of 20 February 2004

opening an invitation to tender for the allocation of A3 export licences for fruit and vegetables (tomatoes, oranges, lemons and apples)

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2200/96 of 28 October 1996 on the common organisation of the market in fruit and vegetables [1], as last amended by Commission Regulation (EC) No 47/2003 [2], and in particular the third subparagraph of Article 35(3) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Commission Regulation (EC) No 1961/2001 [3], amended by Regulation (EC) No 1176/2002 [4], lays down the detailed rules of application for export refunds on fruit and vegetables.

(2) Article 35(1) of Regulation (EC) No 2200/96 provides that, to the extent necessary for economically significant exports, the products exported by the Community may be covered by export refunds, within the limits resulting from agreements concluded in accordance with Article 300 of the Treaty.

(3) Pursuant to Article 35(2) of Regulation (EC) No 2200/96, care must be taken to ensure that the trade flows previously brought about by the refund scheme are not disrupted. For this reason and because exports of fruit and vegetables are seasonal in nature, the quantities scheduled for each product should be fixed, based on the agricultural product nomenclature for export refunds established by Commission Regulation (EEC) No 3846/87 [5], as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 2180/2003 [6]. These quantities must be allocated taking account of the perishability of the products concerned.

(4) Article 35(4) of Regulation (EC) No 2200/96 provides that refunds must be fixed in the light of the existing situation and outlook for fruit and vegetable prices on the Community market and supplies available, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, prices on the international market. Account must also be taken of the transport and marketing costs and of the economic aspect of the exports planned.

(5) In accordance with Article 35(5) of Regulation (EC) No 2200/96, prices on the Community market are to be established in the light of the most favourable prices from the export standpoint.

(6) The international trade situation or the special requirements of certain markets may call for the refund on a given product to vary according to its destination.

(7) Tomatoes, oranges, lemons and apples of classes Extra, I and II of the common quality standards can currently be exported in economically significant quantities.

(8) In order to ensure the best use of available resources and in view of the structure of Community exports, it is appropriate to proceed by an open invitation to tender and to set the indicative refund amount and the scheduled quantities for the period concerned.

(9) The Management Committee for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables has not delivered an opinion within the time limit set by its chairman,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

1. An invitation to tender for the allocation of A3 export licences is hereby opened. The products concerned, the tender submission period, the indicative refund rates and the scheduled quantities are laid down in the Annex hereto.

2. The licences issued in respect of food aid as referred to in Article 16 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1291/2000 [7] shall not count against the eligible quantities in the Annex hereto.

3. Notwithstanding Article 5(6) of Regulation (EC) No 1961/2001, the term of validity of the A3 licences shall be two months.

Article 2

This Regulation shall enter into force on 3 March 2004.

[1] OJ L 297, 21.11.1996, p. 1.
[2] OJ L 7, 11.1.2003, p. 64.
[3] OJ L 268, 9.10.2001, p. 8.
[4] OJ L 170, 29.6.2002, p. 69.
[5] OJ L 366, 24.12.1987, p. 1.
[6] OJ L 335, 22.12.2003, p. 1.
[7] OJ L 152, 24.6.2000, p. 1.