

**RCW 15.44.080 Assessments on milk and cream—Amounts—Increases—
Producer referendum.** (1) There is hereby levied upon all milk produced in this state an assessment of:

(a) 0.75 percent of class I price for 3.5 percent butter fat milk as established in any market area by a market order in effect in that area or by the state department of agriculture in case there is no market order for that area; or

(b) While the federal dairy and tobacco adjustment act of 1983, Title I, Subtitle B-dairy promotion program, is in effect:

(i) An assessment rate not to exceed the rate approved at the most recent referendum that would achieve a ten cent per hundredweight credit to local, state, or regional promotion organizations provided by Title I, Subtitle B of the federal dairy and tobacco adjustment act of 1983; and

(ii) An additional assessment of 0.625 of one cent per hundredweight.

(2) Subject to approval by a producer referendum as provided in this section, the commission shall have the further power and duty to increase the amount of the maximum authorized assessment rate to be levied upon either milk or cream according to the necessities required to effectuate the stated purpose of the commission.

In determining such necessities, the commission shall consider one or more of the following:

(a) The necessities of:

(i) Developing better and more efficient methods of marketing milk and related dairy products;

(ii) Aiding dairy producers in preventing economic waste in the marketing of their commodities;

(iii) Developing and engaging in research for developing better and more efficient production, marketing, and utilization of agricultural products;

(iv) Establishing orderly marketing of dairy products;

(v) Providing for uniform grading and proper preparation of dairy products for market;

(vi) Providing methods and means including but not limited to public relations and promotion, for the maintenance of present markets, for development of new or larger markets, both domestic and foreign, for dairy products produced within this state, and for the prevention, modification, or elimination of trade barriers which obstruct the free flow of such agricultural commodities to market;

(vii) Restoring and maintaining adequate purchasing power for dairy producers of this state; and

(viii) Protecting the interest of consumers by assuring a sufficient pure and wholesome supply of milk and cream of good quality;

(b) The extent and probable cost of required research and market promotion and advertising;

(c) The extent of public convenience, interest, and necessity; and

(d) The probable revenue from the assessment as a consequence of its being revised.

(3) (a) This section shall apply where milk or cream is marketed either in bulk or package. However, this section shall not apply to milk or cream used upon the farm or in the household where produced.

(b) The increase in the maximum authorized assessment rate to be charged producers on milk and cream provided for in this section shall

not become effective until approved by fifty-one percent of the producers voting in a referendum conducted by the commission.

The referendum for approval of any increase in the maximum authorized assessment rate provided for in this section shall be by secret mail ballot furnished to all producers paying assessments to the commission. The commission shall furnish ballots to producers at least ten days in advance of the day it has set for concluding the referendum and counting the ballots. Any interested producer may be present at such time the commission counts the ballots. [2002 c 313 s 95; 1985 c 261 s 18; 1973 1st ex.s. c 41 s 1; 1969 c 60 s 1; 1965 ex.s. c 44 s 1; 1961 c 11 s 15.44.080. Prior: 1959 c 163 s 11; prior: 1949 c 185 s 1, part; 1939 c 219 s 9, part; Rem. Supp. 1949 s 6266-9, part.]

Effective dates—2002 c 313: See note following RCW 15.65.020.