

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket No. TB-99-03]

National Advisory Committee for Tobacco Inspection Services; Meeting

In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) announcement is made of the following committee meeting.

Name: National Advisory Committee for Tobacco Inspection Services.

Date: February 26, 1999.

Time: 9 a.m.

Place: Campbell House Inn, Campbell Room, 1375 Harrodsburg Road, Lexington, Kentucky 40504.

Purpose: To elect officers, review regulations issued pursuant to the Tobacco Inspection Act (7 U.S.C. 511 *et seq.*) and to discuss the level of tobacco inspection services currently provided to producers by AMS. The Committee will recommend the desired level of services to be provided to producers by AMS and an appropriate fee structure to fund the recommended services for the 1999-2000 selling season.

The meeting is open to the public. Persons, other than members, who wish to address the Committee at the meeting should contact John P. Duncan III, Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs, AMS, USDA, Room 502 Annex Building, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456, (202) 205-0567, prior to the meeting. Written statements may be submitted to the Committee before, at, or after the meeting.

Dated: January 21, 1999.

John P. Duncan III,

Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs.
[FR Doc. 99-1784 Filed 1-25-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-126-1]

AgrEvo USA Co.; Receipt of Petition for Determination of Nonregulated Status for Rice Genetically Engineered for Glufosinate Herbicide Tolerance

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has received a petition from AgrEvo USA Company seeking a determination of nonregulated status for certain rice transformation events, which have been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate. The petition has been submitted in accordance with our regulations concerning the introduction of certain genetically engineered organisms and products. In accordance with those regulations, we are soliciting public comments on whether these rice transformation events present a plant pest risk.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before March 29, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Please send an original and three copies of your comments to Docket No. 98-126-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Suite 3C03, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comments refer to Docket No. 98-126-1. A copy of the petition and any comments received may be inspected at USDA, room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing access to that room to inspect the petition or comments are asked to call in advance of visiting at (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the reading room.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. David Heron, Biotechnology and Biological Analysis, PPQ, APHIS, Suite 5B05, 4700 River Road Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-5141. To obtain a copy of the petition, contact Ms. Kay Peterson at (301) 734-4885; e-mail: Kay.Peterson@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The regulations in 7 CFR part 340, "Introduction of Organisms and Products Altered or Produced Through Genetic Engineering Which Are Plant Pests or Which There Is Reason to Believe Are Plant Pests," regulate, among other things, the introduction (importation, interstate movement, or release into the environment) of organisms and products altered or produced through genetic engineering that are plant pests or that there is reason to believe are plant pests. Such genetically engineered organisms and products are considered "regulated articles."

The regulations in § 340.6(a) provide that any person may submit a petition to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) seeking a determination that an article should not be regulated under 7 CFR part 340. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of § 340.6 describe the form that a petition for determination of nonregulated status must take and the information that must be included in the petition.

On November 25, 1998, APHIS received a petition (APHIS Petition No. 98-329-01p) from AgrEvo USA Company (AgrEvo) of Wilmington, DE, requesting a determination of nonregulated status under 7 CFR part 340 for rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) designated as Liberty Link[®] Rice Transformation Events LLRICE06 and LLRICE62 (rice transformation events LLRICE06 and LLRICE62), which have been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate. The AgrEvo petition states that the subject rice transformation events should not be regulated by APHIS because they do not present a plant pest risk.

As described in the petition, rice transformation events LLRICE06 and LLRICE62 have been genetically engineered to contain the *bar* gene derived from *Streptomyces hygroscopicus*, strain HP632. The *bar* gene encodes the enzyme phosphinothricin-N-acetyltransferase (PAT), which confers tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate. Expression of the *bar* gene is controlled by 35S promoter and terminator sequences derived from the plant pathogen cauliflower mosaic virus. The direct gene transfer method was used to transfer the added genes into the parental rice varieties, M202 (LLRICE06) and Bengal (LLRICE62).