

likely to be present; (2) a survey program adequate to detect any additional infestations of plum pox virus that may be present; and (3) a control program to remove all infested orchards. Initial action was taken by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA). The PDA has instituted a quarantine that encompasses the two townships that include the area where plum pox virus is now known to be present. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (the Department) intends to establish a parallel Federal quarantine of this area.

It is essential to the control and eradication of the plum pox virus that orchards known to be infested be removed promptly, along with any additional orchards that are determined to be infested in surveys to be conducted this spring. The Department has reviewed the measures being taken by Pennsylvania to survey, regulate, and control plum pox virus and has consulted with the Governor of Pennsylvania. Based on such review and consultation, the Department has determined that Pennsylvania does not have authority or funds to compensate growers for the removal of infested orchards. Without such funds, it will be unlikely to achieve expeditious removal of the orchards.

The infestation of plum pox virus represents a threat to U.S. stone fruit crops. It constitutes a real danger to the national economy and a potential serious burden on interstate and foreign commerce. Therefore, the Department has determined that an extraordinary emergency exists because of the existence of plum pox virus in Pennsylvania.

In accordance with 7 U.S.C. 150dd, this declaration of extraordinary emergency authorizes the Secretary to: (1) Seize, quarantine, treat, apply other remedial measures to, destroy, or otherwise dispose of, in such manner as the Secretary deems appropriate, any product or article of any character whatsoever, including means of conveyance, that the Secretary has reason to believe is infected by or contains the plum pox virus; and (2) quarantine, treat, or apply other remedial measures to, in such manner as the Secretary deems appropriate, any premises, including articles on such premises, that the Secretary has reason to believe are infected by or contaminated by the plum pox virus. The Governor of Pennsylvania has been informed of these facts.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This declaration of extraordinary emergency shall become effective January 20, 2000.

Dan Glickman,

Secretary of Agriculture.

[FR Doc. 00-4988 Filed 3-1-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Research Service

Notice of Federal Invention Available for Licensing and Intent To Grant Exclusive License

AGENCY: Agricultural Research Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and intent.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Federally owned invention U.S. Patent No. 5,968,541, issued October 19, 1999, entitled "Composition and Method for the Control of Diabroticite Insects" is available for licensing and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, intends to grant to Florida Food Products, Inc., of Eustis, Florida, an exclusive license to Serial No. 08/917,852.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before May 31, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to: USDA, ARS, Office of Technology Transfer, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Room 4-1158, Beltsville, Maryland 20705-5131.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: June Blalock of the Office of Technology Transfer at the Beltsville address given above; telephone: 301-504-5989.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Federal Government's patent rights to this invention is assigned to the United States of America, as represented by the Secretary of Agriculture. It is in the public interest to so license this invention as Florida Food Products, Inc., has submitted a complete and sufficient application for a license. The prospective exclusive license will be royalty-bearing and will comply with the terms and conditions of 35 U.S.C. 209 and 37 CFR 404.7. The prospective exclusive license may be granted unless, within ninety (90) days from the date of this published Notice, the Agricultural Research Service receives written evidence and argument which establishes that the grant of the license would not be consistent with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 209 and 37 CFR 404.7.

Richard M. Parry, Jr.

Assistant Administrator.

[FR Doc. 00-4989 Filed 3-1-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-03-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 00-008-1]

Public Meetings; Imported Fire Ant

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service plans to hold four public meetings to discuss issues related to how we should administer our imported fire ant program in light of reduced funding.

DATES: We invite you to comment on this docket. We will consider all comments that we receive by May 1, 2000.

The public meetings will be held in: (1) Raleigh, NC, on March 21, 2000; (2) Orlando, FL, on March 23, 2000; (3) Austin, TX, on March 28, 2000; and (4) Santa Ana, CA, on March 30, 2000. Each public meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and is scheduled to end at 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: If you cannot attend a public meeting, please send your written comment and three copies to: Docket No. 00-008-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Suite 3C03, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 00-008-1.

You may read any comments that we receive on this docket in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register**, and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

The public meetings will be held at the following locations:

(1) Raleigh, NC: Wake County Commons Buildings, 4011 Cary Drive, Raleigh, NC.

(2) Orlando, FL: Radisson Barcelo Hotel, 8444 International Drive, Orlando, FL.

(3) Austin, TX: Clements Building, Committee Room 5, 15th and Lavaca Streets, Austin, TX.

(4) Santa Ana, CA: Hall of Administration, Board of Supervisors Ante Room—First Floor, 10 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ron Milberg, Operations Officer, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 134, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-5255.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) plans to hold four public meetings to discuss how we should administer our imported fire ant program in light of reduced funding.

Our imported fire ant program is based on our imported fire ant regulations (7 CFR 301.81-1 through 301.81-10, referred to below as the regulations). The regulations govern the interstate movement of regulated articles from areas quarantined because of imported fire ant. Section 301.81-2 of the regulations provides a list of articles regulated because of imported fire ant. Regulated articles are imported fire ant queens and reproducing colonies of imported fire ants, soil (except potting soil shipped in its original container), baled hay or straw stored in direct contact with the ground, nursery stock (except plants maintained indoors in a home or office environment and not for sale), used soil-moving equipment, and any other article determined to present a risk of spreading imported fire ant. Section 301.81-3 of the regulations lists areas quarantined because of imported fire ant. Quarantined areas are all or portions of the following States and territories: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Sections 301.81-4 through 301.81-10 provide requirements for moving regulated articles interstate from quarantined areas to nonquarantined areas. These sections include requirements for certificates and limited permits and for treatment of regulated articles.

For fiscal year (FY) 2000, Congress gave APHIS \$100,000 to cover the costs of administering the imported fire ant program and directed APHIS to use \$58,000 of that amount to administer the program in New Mexico. Although \$100,000 is considerably less than the amount allotted to the program for FY 1999, this amount is actually more than APHIS requested. For several years, APHIS has sought to eliminate its imported fire ant control activities because no economical, environmentally acceptable control agents specific to imported fire ant are

available for large-scale application on agricultural land. Also, APHIS has not received any requests from States for cooperative treatment programs since 1985. In past years, APHIS has provided States with technical knowledge, treatment guidelines, and regulatory guidelines to help control imported fire ant populations; the States have conducted regulatory and survey activities. Through this arrangement, States have maintained a strong regulatory program and have even eradicated small, isolated infestations outside quarantined areas.

In support of these efforts to control imported fire ant, APHIS successfully tested the insecticide fipronil in FY 1998. Fipronil would be used to treat nursery stock and grass sod moving interstate from quarantined areas. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently reviewing this insecticide; it may be registered by the EPA for use in the spring of 2001. APHIS plans to continue to evaluate the efficacy of new regulatory treatments for imported fire ant under its plant methods development laboratories? budget line item.

The public meetings will provide an opportunity for interested persons to comment on whether APHIS should continue to administer the imported fire ant program in accordance with the regulations (and if so, how we should manage the program in light of current funding) or if we should pursue another course of action. Please note, however, that while the information gathered during the meetings may indicate the need for changes to our current regulatory program, the meetings will not directly result in any changes to the regulations. If we determine that changes to the regulations are appropriate, we will propose those changes in the **Federal Register**.

Issues

We have identified three potential courses of action with respect to the imported fire ant program. They are:

(1) Maintain our imported fire ant program with minimal Federal regulatory activity, in line with current funding.

This option would, through APHIS regulations, continue to provide uniform standards for the regulated industry and consistent interstate shipping requirements. Under this option, States would continue to enforce the Federal quarantine without Federal funding. When alerted by States, APHIS personnel would continue to investigate noncompliance with the regulations and examine the origin and pathway of

introduction of imported fire ants found on regulated articles.

(2) Eliminate the imported fire ant regulations (*i.e.*, rescind the Federal quarantine) and develop model guidelines for States to use in harmonizing their quarantines.

This option would reduce Federal resource requirements and may provide uniformity without Federal regulation. However, in the absence of Federal regulations, States may independently impose more or less stringent requirements for the entry of currently regulated articles. Requirements could differ from State to State.

(3) Eliminate the imported fire ant regulations (*i.e.*, rescind the Federal quarantine) and establish a voluntary nursery self-certification program.

This option would also reduce Federal resource requirements and may provide uniformity without Federal regulation. However, a voluntary self-certification program is not a mandatory program and could, therefore, result in less than 100 percent participation by producers.

Comments on these, or any other options, are welcome during the public meetings.

Meeting Procedures/Registration

A representative of APHIS will preside at each public meeting. Any interested person may appear and be heard in person, by attorney, or by another representative. Written statements may be submitted and will be made part of the meeting record. Persons who wish to speak at a meeting will be asked to provide their names and organizations. We ask that anyone who reads a statement or submits a written statement provide two copies to the presiding officer at the meeting.

Registration for each public meeting will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. on the day of the meeting at the meeting room. Each public meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and is scheduled to end at 5 p.m., local time. However, any meeting may end at any time after it begins if all persons desiring to speak have been heard. If the number of speakers at a meeting warrants it, the presiding officer may limit the time for presentations so that everyone wishing to speak has the opportunity.

Written Comments

If you cannot attend a public meeting, you may submit written comments on the issues raised in this notice. To submit written comments, please follow the instructions listed under the heading **ADDRESSES** near the beginning of this document.

Done in Washington, DC, this 24th day of February 2000.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 00-5053 Filed 3-1-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 00-006N]

Exemption for Retail Stores; Adjustment for Dollar Limitations

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has increased the limitation on annual sales of meat and meat food products by retail stores whose operations are exempt from Federal inspection. The dollar limitation for poultry products has been kept unchanged at \$39,000 for calendar year 2000. The dollar limitation for meat and meat food products has been increased from \$41,000 to \$42,500 for calendar year 2000. This increase conforms to the price change for meat and meat food products indicated by the Consumer Price Index.

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 2, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel L. Engeljohn, Ph.D., Director, Regulations Development and Analysis Division, Office of Policy, Program Development, and Evaluation, FSIS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 112, Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20250, (202) 720-5627, fax number (202) 690-0486.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Background

Under the regulations in 9 CFR 303.1(d) and 381.10(d), FSIS exempts certain operations of types traditionally and usually conducted at retail stores from routine Federal inspection of meat and poultry products. Whether a retail store operation qualifies for an exemption depends, in part, on the percentage and volume of trade in meat and poultry products that a retail store conducts with non-household consumers (hotels, restaurants, or similar institutions). The regulations state in dollars the annual maximum amount of meat and poultry products that a retail store may sell to non-household consumers if that store's operations are to remain exempt from inspection.

FSIS adjusts the dollar limitation during the first quarter of each calendar year if the Consumer Price Index, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, indicates at least a \$500 increase or decrease in the price of the same volume of product during the previous year. FSIS publishes a notice of the adjusted dollar limitation in the *Federal Register*.

The Consumer Price Index for 1999 indicates an average annual price increase in meat and meat food products of 3.6 percent and an average annual price decrease in poultry products of 2.8 percent. When rounded off to the nearest \$100, the price increase for meat and meat food products amounts to \$1,500 and the price decrease for poultry products amounts to \$200. Prices of meat and meat food products, therefore, have changed in excess of \$500, and those of poultry have decreased by less than \$500. In accordance with §§ 303.1(d)(2)(iii)(b) and 381.10(d)(2)(iii)(b) of the regulations, FSIS has increased the dollar limitation of permitted sales of meat and meat food products from \$41,000 to \$42,500 and has kept the dollar limitation of permitted sales for poultry products at \$39,000.

Additional Public Notification

Public awareness of all segments of rulemaking and policy development is important. Consequently, in an effort to better ensure that minorities, women, and persons with disabilities are aware of this notice, FSIS will announce it and provide copies of this *Federal Register* publication in the FSIS Constituent Update. FSIS provides a weekly FSIS Constituent Update, which is communicated via fax to over 300 organizations and individuals. In addition, the update is available on line through the FSIS web page located at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>. The update is used to provide information regarding FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, *Federal Register* notices, FSIS public meetings, recalls, and any other types of information that could affect or would be of interest to our constituents/stakeholders. The constituent fax list consists of industry, trade, and farm groups, consumer interest groups, allied health professionals, scientific professionals, and other individuals that have requested to be included. Through these various channels, FSIS is able to provide information to a much broader, more diverse audience. For more information and to be added to the constituent fax list, fax your request to the Congressional and Public Affairs Office, at (202) 720-5704.

Done at Washington, DC, on: February 24, 2000.

Thomas J. Billy,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 00-5055 Filed 3-1-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-DM-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Revision to Solitude Mountain Resort Master Development Plan Update, Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Salt Lake Ranger District, Salt Lake County, UT

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

SUMMARY: The Salt Lake Ranger District, of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest, will conduct a new public scoping process and prepare an EIS on Solitude Ski Resort's (Solitude) revised proposal to update their Master Development Plan.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by April 4, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Daniel J. Jiron, District Ranger, 6944 South 3000 East, Salt Lake City, Utah 84121.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Scheid, Project Manager, (801) 733-2689.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Solitude is proposing to revise its Master Development Plan Update. During the spring and summer of 1995, Solitude Ski Resort submitted to the Forest Service an updated Master Development Plan (MDP) detailing proposed ski area and facility modifications. Public comment was initially solicited on August 4, 1995 through the issuance of a scoping document, followed by a public meeting on August 25, 1995. A second public scoping notice was issued for Solitude in July 1996, after the Forest Service determined that an EIS needed to be prepared. A public field review was also held in September 1997 to view and discuss proposed projects and potential alternatives for Solitude's MDP update.

The planning horizon for Solitude's original MDP update was approximately five years. Due to the substantial elapse of time (four years), there is now a need to extend the planning horizon of Solitude's MDP update. In addition, Solitude's desire to address public and Agency issues pertaining to their proposed facilities has resulted in a