

resources in North America by coordinating joint programs of mutual interest.

To assist us in our decisionmaking, APHIS has prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA), entitled "Pine Shoot Beetle Host Material from Canada" (December 2000), that considers alternative actions and the associated environmental impacts for addressing the spread of PSB into noninfested areas of the United States. The alternative actions reviewed and analyzed include implementing reciprocal regulations on imported PSB host material from Canada, taking no action (i.e., retaining the current domestic quarantine program only), or rescinding the domestic quarantine program and not implementing reciprocal regulations on imported PSB host material from Canada.

We are making this draft EA available to the public for review and comment. We will consider all comments that we receive by the date listed under the heading **DATES** at the beginning of this notice.

The draft EA may be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/es/ppq/psbcan.pdf>. You may also request paper copies of the draft EA by calling or writing to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Please refer to the title of the draft EA when requesting copies. The draft EA is also available for review in our reading room (information on the location and hours of the reading room is listed under the heading **ADDRESSES** at the beginning of this notice).

The draft EA has been prepared in accordance with: (1) The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), (2) regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), (3) USDA regulations implementing NEPA (7 CFR part 1), and (4) APHIS' NEPA Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372).

Done in Washington, DC, this 28th day of February 2001.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 01–5422 Filed 3–5–01; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 00–008–2]

Imported Fire Ant

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will continue to administer its imported fire ant program.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: 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 the imported fire ant. Section 301.81–2 of the regulations provides a list of articles regulated because of the 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 (unless removed of all noncompacted soil), and any other article or means of conveyance determined to present a risk of spreading imported fire ant. Section 301.81–3 of the regulations lists areas quarantined because of the 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.

On March 2, 2000, we published in the **Federal Register** (65 FR 11281–11283, Docket No. 00–008–1), a notice announcing four public meetings to discuss how we should administer our imported fire ant program in light of

reduced funding. The meetings were held in Raleigh, NC, on March 21, 2000; Orlando, FL, on March 23, 2000; Austin, TX, on March 28, 2000; and Santa Ana, CA, on March 30, 2000. We also solicited written comments on our notice for 60 days, ending May 1, 2000.

In the notice, we asked the public to comment on the following three options: (1) Maintain our imported fire ant program with minimal Federal regulatory activity, in line with Fiscal Year 2000 funding; (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; or (3) eliminate the imported fire ant regulations (i.e., rescind the Federal quarantine) and establish a voluntary nursery self-certification program.

Approximately 105 individuals representing industry and cooperating States attended the public meetings. In addition, we received 58 written comments in response to the notice by the May 1, 2000, close of the comment period. They were from representatives of industry, cooperating States, and other interested individuals. With one exception, those who spoke at the public meetings and those who submitted written comments supported retention of the current imported fire ant program with a significant increase in funding for the program. They stated that the program enhances producers' ability to move regulated articles interstate. One commenter recommended enacting more stringent regulations in order to prevent the spread of the imported fire ant to the State of Hawaii. The majority of respondents also supported the National Plant Board's proposal for \$7.5 million in congressional funding for the imported fire ant program and the Gulfport Plant Protection Station's unique methods development work.

Given the public support for our imported fire ant program, we will maintain the program in line with current funding. Therefore, our regulations will continue to provide uniform standards for the regulated industry, along with consistent interstate shipping requirements. Along with cooperating States, we will also continue to enforce the Federal quarantine. This means that when alerted by States, APHIS personnel will investigate noncompliance with the regulations and will examine the origin and pathway of introduction of imported fire ants found on regulated articles. In addition, we will continue to develop new regulatory treatments and nursery compliance protocols to control or reduce imported fire ant populations

in nursery production areas. For the development of new regulatory treatments, about \$350,000 is allocated annually to our plant protection station in Gulfport, MS. To our knowledge, the Gulfport Plant Protection Station is the only facility in the country that is developing regulatory treatments for the imported fire ant.

In response to public support for increased funding for our imported fire ant program, Congress restored about \$2.1 million for the imported fire ant program in Fiscal Year 2001. The majority of this appropriation will be distributed to States for enforcement and regulatory activities. We will retain a small percentage for administrative costs.

Done in Washington, DC, this 28th day of February 2001.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 01-5421 Filed 3-5-01; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 01-011N]

Codex Alimentarius: Meeting of the Codex *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Animal Feeding

AGENCY: Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), are sponsoring a public meeting, on Tuesday, March 6, 2001. The purpose of this meeting is to provide information and receive public comments on agenda items that will be discussed at the 2nd Session of the Codex *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Animal Feeding, which will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on March 19-21, 2001. USDA and FDA recognize the importance of providing interested parties the opportunity to obtain background information on the 2nd Session of the Codex *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Animal Feeding and to address items on the Agenda.

DATES: The public meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 6, 2001, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will be held in the Conference Room M of the

Parklawn Building, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20855 (Twinbrook Metro Station on the Red Line).

Reference documents will be available for review in the FSIS Docket Room, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 102 Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3700. The documents will also be accessible via the World Wide Web at the following address: http://www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/economic/esn/codex/ccaf02/af01_01e.htm.

Submit one original and two copies of written comments to the FSIS Docket Room and at the address above and reference docket number 01-011N. All comments submitted in response to this notice will be available for public inspection in the FSIS Docket Room between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Patrick J. Clerkin, Associate U.S. Manager for Codex, U.S. Codex Office, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 4861, South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250. Telephone (202) 205-7760, Fax: (202) 720-3157. Persons requiring a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations should notify Mr. Clerkin at the above number.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Codex Alimentarius Commission was established in 1962 by two United Nations organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Codex is the major international organization for encouraging fair international trade in food and protecting the health and economic interests of consumers. Through adoption of food standards, codes of practice, and other guidelines developed by its committees, and by promoting their adoption and implementation by governments, Codex seeks to ensure that the world's food supply is sound, wholesome, free from adulteration, and correctly labeled. In the United States, USDA, FDA, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) manage and carry out U.S. Codex activities.

The Codex *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Animal Feeding was established by the 23rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to develop Guidelines or Standards as appropriate on Good Animal Feeding practices with the aim of ensuring the safety and quality of foods of animal

origin. The *ad hoc* Task Force is chaired by Denmark.

Issues To Be Discussed at the Public Meeting

The provisional agenda items to be discussed during the public meeting:

1. Information paper compiling a list of internationally available standards and validated methods for the examination of animal feed.

2. Information paper on lists established by different governments to control the use of prohibited and undesirable substances in animal feed or other approaches.

3. Consideration of the Revised Draft Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding at Step 4.

Public Meeting

At the March 6th public meeting, the agenda items will be described, discussed, and attendees will have the opportunity to pose questions and offer comments. Comments may be sent to the FSIS Docket Room (see **ADDRESSES**). Written comments should state that they relate to activities of the 2nd *ad hoc* International Task Force on Animal Feeding.

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.