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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 02-100-1]

Notice of Request for Extension of Approval of an Information Collection

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Extension of approval of an information collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's intention to request an extension of approval of an information collection in support of regulations issued under the Animal Welfare Act for guinea pigs, hamsters, and rabbits.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before December 30, 2002.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 02-100-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 02-100-1. If you use e-mail, address your comment to regulations@aphis.usda.gov. Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and "Docket No. 02-100-1" on the subject line.

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>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information regarding the Animal Welfare Act regulations for guinea pigs, hamsters, and rabbits, contact Dr. Barbara Kohn, Senior Staff Veterinarian, Animal Care, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 84, Riverdale, MD 20737-1234; (301) 734-7833. For copies of more detailed information on the information collection, contact Mrs. Celeste Sickles, APHIS' Information Collection Coordinator, at (301) 734-7477.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: *Title:* Animal Welfare; Guinea Pigs, Hamsters, and Rabbits.

OMB Number: 0579-0092.

Type of Request: Extension of approval of an information collection.

Abstract: The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) administers regulations and standards that have been promulgated under the Animal Welfare Act to promote and ensure the humane care and treatment of regulated animals under the Act. The regulations in title 9, part 3, subparts B and C, of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) contain specifications for the humane handling, care, treatment, and transportation of guinea pigs, hamsters, and rabbits. The regulations require, among other things, the documentation of specified information concerning the transportation of these animals.

The transportation standards for guinea pigs, hamsters, and rabbits require intermediate handlers and carriers to accept only shipping enclosures that meet the minimum requirements set forth in the regulations (§§ 3.36 and 3.61) or that are accompanied by documentation signed by the consignor verifying that the shipping enclosures comply with the regulations. If guinea pigs, hamsters, or rabbits are transported in cargo space that falls below 45 °F (7.2 °C), the

regulations specify that the animals must be accompanied by a certificate of acclimation signed by a USDA-accredited veterinarian.

In addition, all shipping enclosures must be marked with the words "Live Animals" and have arrows indicating the correct upright position of the container. Intermediate handlers and carriers are required to attempt to contact the consignee at least once every 6 hours upon the arrival of any live animals. Documentation of these attempts must be recorded by the intermediate handlers and carriers and maintained for inspection by APHIS personnel.

The above reporting and recordkeeping requirements do not mandate the use of any official government form.

The burden generated by APHIS requirements that all shipping documents be attached to the container has been cleared by the Office of Management (OMB) under OMB control number 0579-0036.

The reporting and recordkeeping requirements of 9 CFR part 3, subparts B and C, are necessary to enforce regulations intended to ensure the humane treatment of guinea pigs, hamsters, and rabbits during transportation in commerce.

We are asking OMB to approve our use of this information collection activity for an additional 3 years.

The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public (as well as affected agencies) concerning our information collection. These comments will help us:

(1) Evaluate whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(2) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the burden of the information collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(4) Minimize the burden of the information collection on those who are to respond, through use, as appropriate, of automated, electronic, mechanical, and other collection technologies, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

Estimate of burden: The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.11555 hours per response.

Respondents: Intermediate handlers, carriers, "A" and "B" dealers (as consignors), USDA-accredited veterinarians.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 1,470.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 1.53.

Estimated annual number of responses: 2,240.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 260 hours. (Due to averaging, the total annual burden hours may not equal the product of the annual number of responses multiplied by the reporting burden per response.)

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Done in Washington, DC, this 28th day of October, 2002.

Peter Fernandez,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 02-27685 Filed 10-30-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 02-098-1]

Giant Salvinia; Availability of an Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has prepared an environmental assessment relative to a proposed field release of the non-indigenous salvinia weevil for the biological control of the aquatic weed giant salvinia. The environmental assessment documents our review and analysis of environmental impacts associated with widespread release of this agent. We are making the environmental assessment available to the public for review and comment.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before December 2, 2002.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four

copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 02-098-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 02-098-1. If you use e-mail, address your comment to regulations@aphis.usda.gov. Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and "Docket No. 02-098-1" in the subject line.

You may read any comments that we receive on the environmental assessment 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>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Tracy A. Horner, Environmental Services, PPD, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 149, Riverdale, MD 20737-1228; (301) 734-5213.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) is a free-floating aquatic fern, native to South America, with a tremendous growth rate and the potential to significantly affect water-reliant agricultural industries and recreation and the ecology of freshwater habitats throughout much of the United States.

Giant salvinia reproduces vegetatively through fragmenting and from dormant buds breaking away. The colonizing or immature stage of giant salvinia is characterized by small leaves that lie flat upon the water. As plant growth accelerates, the leaves become larger, crowding occurs, and the plants are pushed upright. Mats may grow to a meter thick and can cover large areas.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) listed giant salvinia as a noxious weed in 1983. Under APHIS' regulations, no person may move giant salvinia into or through the United States, or interstate, unless he or she obtains a permit for the movement from APHIS.

Because giant salvinia is a free-floating plant, it disperses by passive means (water currents and wind) and by "hitchhiking." Animals may carry the plants over short distances, but humans can spread it widely on fishing gear and boating equipment. Intercontinental dispersal and dispersal within the United States have probably occurred when giant salvinia was sold in the nursery trade, either intentionally as a plant for aquaria or for ponds, or unintentionally when it "hitchhiked" with other aquatic plants collected for academic study or for use in aquaria or ponds. Although native to southeastern Brazil, giant salvinia is now found in North America, South America, Africa, Asia, Australia, New Guinea, and Oceania.

In the past several years, giant salvinia has been detected in the United States, mostly in association with the nursery trade in aquatic plants. Generally, detections have been in small, confined sites and are currently contained or have been eradicated. Such detections have occurred in Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Most recently, giant salvinia was found in the Toledo Bend Reservoir and the surrounding areas in Louisiana and eastern Texas. As a result of this infestation, APHIS prepared an environmental assessment (EA) and has issued permits for the environmental release of the non-indigenous salvinia weevil (*Cyrtobagous salviniae*) into the limited area of the Toledo Bend Reservoir.

APHIS has now received a permit application for additional releases of the salvinia weevil into other areas of the continental United States beyond the area considered in the existing APHIS EA. The applicant proposes to release the salvinia weevil to reduce the severity and extent of giant salvinia infestation in the United States. The salvinia weevil is native to Brazil, Bolivia, and Paraguay. Salvinia weevil larvae tunnel within the rhizomes of giant salvinia, causing them to disintegrate. They also tunnel in the leaf buds and adults eat leaves and leaf buds, suppressing growth and vegetative propagation of this sterile weed. This insect has successfully controlled giant salvinia in 12 countries over 3 continents.

APHIS' review and analysis of the proposed action and its alternatives are documented in detail in an EA entitled, "Field Release of the Salvinia Weevil, *Cyrtobagous salviniae* Calder and Sands (Curculionidae: Coleoptera) for Control of Giant Salvinia, *Salvinia molesta*