necessary information is not collected or actions are not taken timely.

Description of Respondents: State, Local, and Tribal Government; Individuals or household.

Number of Respondents: 18,131,799.

Frequency of Responses: Recordkeeping; Reporting: On occasion; Monthly; Quarterly.

Total Burden Hours: 28,333,895.

Farm Service Agency

Title: Brokerage Agreement for the Transportation of USDA Commodities.

OMB Control Number: 0560–NEW.

Summary of Collection: 49 U.S.C. 13102(2), 13712, and 49 CFR Chapter 10, Part 1090–1099, authorizes the Export Operations Division (EOD) to collect information to determine Broker compliance with KCCO requirements and to determine the eligibility of Brokers to haul agricultural products for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Brokers must complete the Brokerage Agreement for the transportation of USDA commodities. The Brokerage Agreement is used to establish the transportation service needs of the USDA, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Kansas City Commodity Office (KCCO), operating as Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), for the brokered movement of its freight.

Need and Use of the Information: FSA will collect information to ensure that the applicant has both the willingness and the capability to meet the needs of KCCO and to establish the rules for which the broker can expect corporation. Without the information, KCCO could not meet program requirements.

Description of Respondents: Business or other for-profit; Not-for-profit institutions; Federal Government; State, Local or Tribal Government.

Number of Respondents: 113.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: Other (Once).

Total Burden Hours: 113.

Sondra Blakey,

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 02–31570 Filed 12–13–02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–01–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 02–092–1]

Aventis CropScience; Availability of Petition and Environmental Assessment for Determination of Nonregulated Status for Cotton 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 Aventis CropScience seeking a determination of nonregulated status for cotton designated as Transformation Event LLCotton25, which has 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 this cotton presents a plant pest risk. We are also making available for public comment an environmental assessment for the proposed determination of nonregulated status.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before February 14, 2003.

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 comments (an original and three copies) to Docket No. 02–092–l, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Suite 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737–1238. Please state that your comments refer to Docket No. 02–092–1. 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. 02–092–1'' on the subject line.

You may read the petition, the environmental assessment, and any comments we receive on this notice of availability in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141, 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 that someone is available 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.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Susan Koehler, Biotechnology Regulatory Services, APHIS, Suite 5B05, 4700 River Road Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737–1236; (301) 734–4886. To obtain a copy of the petition or the environmental assessment, contact Ms. Kay Peterson at (301) 734–4885; e-mail: *Kay.Peterson@aphis.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 a determination of nonregulated status must take and the information that must be included in the petition.

On February 12, 2002, APHIS received a petition (APHIS Petition No. 02–042–01p) from Aventis CropScience (Aventis) of Research Triangle Park, NC, requesting a determination of nonregulated status under 7 CFR part 340 for cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum* L.) designated as Transformation Event LLCotton25 (LLCotton25), which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate. The Aventis petition states that the subject cotton should not be regulated by APHIS because it does not present a plant pest risk.

As described in the petition, LLCotton25 has been genetically engineered to contain a stably integrated *bar* gene isolated from *Streptomyces*

hygroscopicus, strain ATCC21705. The *bar* gene encodes phosphinothricin-N-acetyltransferase (PAT), and the PAT enzyme catalyzes the conversion of L-phosphinothricin, the active ingredient in glufosinate, to an inactive form, thus conferring resistance to the herbicide. Expression of the added genes is controlled in part by gene sequences from the plant pathogens cauliflower mosaic virus and *Agrobacterium tumefaciens. Agrobacterium*-mediated gene transfer was used to transfer the added genes into the recipient Coker 312 cotton variety.

LLCotton25 has been considered a regulated article under the regulations in 7 CFR part 340 because it contains gene sequences from plant pathogens. This cotton has been field tested since 1999 in the United States under APHIS notifications. In the process of reviewing the notifications for field trials of the subject cotton, APHIS determined that the vectors and other elements were disarmed and that the trials, which were conducted under conditions of reproductive and physical containment or isolation, would not present a risk of plant pest introduction or dissemination.

In § 403 of the Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7701–7772), ''plant pest'' is defined as any living stage of any of the following that can directly or indirectly injure, cause damage to, or cause disease in any plant or plant product: A protozoan, a nonhuman animal, a parasitic plant, a bacterium, a fungus, a virus or viroid, an infectious agent or other pathogen, or any article similar to or allied with any of the foregoing. APHIS views this definition very broadly. The definition covers direct or indirect injury, disease, or damage not just to agricultural crops, but also to plants in general, for example, native species, as well as to organisms that may be beneficial to plants, for example, honeybees, rhizobia, etc.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for the regulation of pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), as amended (7 U.S.C. 136 *et seq.*). FIFRA requires that all pesticides, including herbicides, be registered prior to distribution or sale, unless exempt by EPA regulation. In cases in which genetically modified plants allow for a new use of a pesticide or involve a different use pattern for the pesticide, EPA must approve the new or different use. Accordingly, Aventis has submitted a pesticide petition to EPA to expand the registration of glufosinate to include use on LLCotton25.

When the use of the pesticide on the genetically modified plant would result in an increase in the residues in a food or feed crop for which the pesticide is currently registered, or in new residues in a crop for which the pesticide is not currently registered, establishment of a new tolerance or a revision of the existing tolerance would be required. Residue tolerances for pesticides are established by EPA under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA), as amended (21 U.S.C. 301 *et seq.*), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) enforces tolerances set by EPA under the FFDCA.

FDA published a statement of policy on foods derived from new plant varieties in the **Federal Register** on May 29, 1992 (57 FR 22984–23005). The FDA statement of policy includes a discussion of FDA's authority for ensuring food safety under the FFDCA, and provides guidance to industry on the scientific considerations associated with the development of foods derived from new plant varieties, including those plants developed through the techniques of genetic engineering. The petitioner has begun consultation with FDA on the subject cotton.

In accordance with § 340.6(d) of the regulations, we are publishing this notice to inform the public that APHIS will accept written comments regarding the petition for determination of nonregulated status from interested persons for a period of 60 days from the date of this notice. We are also soliciting written comments from interested persons on the environmental assessment (EA) prepared to provide the public with documentation of APHIS' review and analysis of any potential environmental impacts and plant pest risk associated with a proposed determination of nonregulated status for Aventis' LLCotton25.

The EA was 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 1b), and (4) APHIS' NEPA Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372). The petition and the environmental assessment and any comments received are available for public review, and copies of the petition and the environmental assessment may be ordered (see the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this notice).

After the comment period closes, APHIS will review the data submitted by the petitioner, all written comments received during the comment period, and any other relevant information. After reviewing and evaluating the comments on the petition and the environmental assessment and other data and information, APHIS will furnish a response to the petitioner, either approving the petition in whole or in part, or denying the petition. APHIS will then publish a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing the regulatory status of Aventis' herbicide-tolerant LLCotton25 and the availability of APHIS' written decision.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 166, 1622n, 7756, and 7761–7772; 31 U.S.C. 9701;7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

Done in Washington, DC, this 10th day of December 2002.

Peter Fernandez,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 02–31567 Filed 12–13–02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 02–102–1]

Draft Guideline on Testing for the Detection of Mycoplasma Contamination

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: A draft guideline titled ''Testing for the Detection of Mycoplasma Contamination'' has been developed by the International Cooperation on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products (VICH). The draft guideline provides procedures for the testing of some veterinary biologics to detect mycoplasma contamination. Since the draft guideline applies to veterinary biological products regulated by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service under the Virus-Serum-Toxin Act, we are requesting comments on its provisions so that we may include any relevant public input on the draft in the Agency's comments to the VICH Steering Committee.

DATES: We will consider all comments on the draft guideline that we receive on or before February 14, 2003.

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