

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 20.

Estimated annual number of responses: 3,000.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 1,500 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 September 2004.

Elizabeth E. Gaston,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. E4-2470 Filed 10-1-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 04-097-1]

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 associated with accrediting nongovernment facilities to perform services related to the export certification of plants or plant products.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before December 3, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- **EDOCKET:** Go to <http://www.epa.gov/feddocket> to submit or view public comments, access the index listing of the contents of the official public docket, and to access those documents in the public docket that are available electronically. Once you have entered EDOCKET, click on the "View Open APHIS Dockets" link to locate this document.

- **Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:** Please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to Docket No. 04-097-1, 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. 04-097-1.

- **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. 04-097-1" on the subject line.

- **Agency Web Site:** Go to <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/cominst.html> for a form you can use to submit an e-mail comment through the APHIS Web site.

Reading Room: 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.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information regarding the accreditation program, contact Mr. Michael Ward, Accreditation Program Manager, Phytosanitary Issues Management, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road, Unit 140, Riverdale, MD 20737; (301) 734-8262. 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: Accreditation of Nongovernment Facilities.

OMB Number: 0579-0130.

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

Abstract: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), among other things, provides export certification services to assure other countries that the plants and plant products they are receiving from the United States are free of plant pests specified by the receiving country. This activity is authorized by the Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7701-7772).

The export certification regulations, which are contained in 7 CFR part 353, describe the procedures for obtaining

certification for plants and plant products offered for export or reexport. Our regulations do not require that we engage in export certification activities; however, we perform this work as a service to exporters who are shipping plants or plant products to countries that require phytosanitary certification as a condition of entry.

After assessing the condition of the plants or plant products intended for export (*i.e.*, after conducting a phytosanitary inspection), an inspector will issue an internationally recognized phytosanitary certificate, a phytosanitary certificate for reexport, or an export certificate for processed plant products. Laboratory testing of plant or plant product samples is an important component of the certification process.

The regulations allow nongovernment facilities (such as commercial laboratories and private inspection services) to be accredited by APHIS to perform specific laboratory testing or phytosanitary inspections that could serve as the basis for issuing Federal phytosanitary certificates, phytosanitary certificates for reexport, or export certificates for processed plant products.

The accreditation process requires the use of several information collection activities to ensure that nongovernment facilities applying for accreditation possess the necessary qualifications.

We are asking the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve our use of these information collection activities 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 collection of information, 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 collection of information 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 3.4482 hours per response.

Respondents: U.S. growers, shippers, and exporters; State and plant health protection authorities.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 15.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 5.8.

Estimated annual number of responses: 87.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 300 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 September, 2004.

Elizabeth E. Gaston,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. E4-2474 Filed 10-1-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 04-039-2]

Mile-A-Minute Weed; Availability of an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that an environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact have been prepared by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service relative to issuing a permit for the environmental release of the nonindigenous weevil *Rhinoncomimus latipes* Korotyaev (Coleoptera: Curculionidae), a potential biological control agent of mile-a-minute weed (*Polygonum perfoliatum*). The environmental assessment documents our review and analysis of environmental impacts associated with, and alternatives to, issuing a permit for the environmental release of the weevil in the continental United States. Based on its finding of no significant impact, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has determined that an environmental impact statement need not be prepared.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact are available for public inspection 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Robert Flanders, Branch Chief, Biological and Technical Services, Pest Permit Evaluations, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 133, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-5930.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Mile-a-minute weed (*Polygonum perfoliatum* L. [Polygonaceae]) is an annual vine that is indigenous to Asia. Since it was accidentally introduced into Pennsylvania via imported nursery stock in the 1930s, it has become established throughout the northeastern United States. The weed grows rapidly, with stems that can extend up to 6 meters. Its stems, petioles, and leaf veins are covered with downward-curving barbs that aid the plant in climbing and supporting itself on other plants.

Large, dense patches of mile-a-minute weed develop during the summer. As the vines climb over and cover other plants, they block available sunlight, which can reduce the population of native plant species in affected areas. Mile-a-minute weed can also interfere with Christmas tree farms, pine plantations, and reforestation projects by smothering tree seedlings. Nursery and horticultural crops that are not regularly tilled can also be affected by mile-a-minute weed. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and several States list mile-a-minute weed as a noxious weed.

On June 1, 2004, we published in the **Federal Register** (69 FR 30865-30866, Docket No. 04-039-1) a notice in which we announced the availability, for public review and comment, of an environmental assessment documenting our review and analysis of environmental impacts associated with issuing a permit for the release of the nonindigenous weevil *Rhinoncomimus latipes* Korotyaev (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) as a biological control agent of mile-a-minute weed in the continental United States. Research suggests that larval feeding by this weevil has the potential to kill small mile-a-minute weed plants and stunt and reduce seed production by larger plants. Alternatives to issuing the permit were also examined in the

environmental assessment, and included no action, herbicides, mechanical control, and cultural control.

We solicited comments on the environmental assessment for 30 days ending on July 1, 2004. We received one comment by that date, from a private citizen. The commenter objected to APHIS programs and activities in general, but did not address the environmental assessment. Therefore, we are making no changes to the environmental assessment based on this comment.

The environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact may be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/>. In the middle of that page, click on "Document/Forms Retrieval System." At the next screen, click on the triangle beside "Permits—Environmental Assessments." A list of documents will appear; the environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact for mile-a-minute weed are document number 0037. You may request paper copies of the environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact by calling or writing to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Please refer to the title of the environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact when requesting copies. The environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact are 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 environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact have 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 September 2004.

Elizabeth E. Gaston,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. E4-2473 Filed 10-1-04; 8:45 am]

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