

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2008-0132]

Notice of Request for Extension of Approval of an Information Collection; Special Need Requests Under the Plant Protection Act

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 regulations to allow States to impose prohibitions or restrictions on specific articles in addition to those required by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to help protect against the introduction and establishment of plant pests.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before February 6, 2009.

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

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2008-0132> to submit or view comments and to view supporting and related materials available electronically.

- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:* Please send two copies of your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0132, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0132.

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: Additional information about APHIS and its programs is available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information on special need requests under the Plant Protection Act, contact Dr. Osama El Lissy, Director, Emergency Management, Emergency and Domestic Programs, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 137, Riverdale, MD 20737; (301) 734-8247. For copies of more detailed information on the information collection, contact Mrs. Celeste Sickles, APHIS' Information Collection Coordinator, at (301) 851-2908.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Special Need Requests Under the Plant Protection Act.

OMB Number: 0579-0291.

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

Abstract: As authorized by the Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7701 *et seq.*) (PPA), the Secretary of Agriculture may prohibit or restrict the importation, entry, exportation, or movement in interstate commerce of any plant, plant product, biological control organism, noxious weed, means of conveyance, or other article if the Secretary determines that the prohibition or restriction is necessary to prevent a plant pest or noxious weed from being introduced into or disseminated within the United States. This authority has been delegated to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), which administers regulations to implement the PPA. Regulations governing the interstate movement of plants, plant products, and other articles are contained in 7 CFR part 301, "Domestic Quarantine Notices."

The regulations in "Subpart-Special Need Requests" allow States or political subdivisions of States to request approval from APHIS to impose prohibitions or restrictions on the movement in interstate commerce of

specific articles that pose a plant health risk that are in addition to the prohibitions and restrictions imposed by APHIS. This process requires information collection activities, including a pest data detection survey with a pest risk analysis showing that a pest is not present in a State, or, if already present, the current distribution in the State, and that the pest would harm or injure the environment and/or agricultural resources of the State or political subdivision.

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 160 hours per response.

Respondents: State Governments.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 10.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 1.

Estimated annual number of responses: 10.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 1,600 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 2nd day of December 2008.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. E8-28966 Filed 12-5-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2008-0094]

Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.; Availability of Petition and Environmental Assessment for Determination of Nonregulated Status for Corn Genetically Engineered for Tolerance to Glyphosate and Acetolactate Synthase-Inhibiting Herbicides

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 Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., seeking a determination of nonregulated status for corn designated as transformation event 98140, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to glyphosate and acetolactate synthase-inhibiting herbicides. 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 comments on whether this genetically engineered corn is likely to pose 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 we receive on or before February 6, 2009.

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

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2008-0094> to submit or view comments and to view supporting and related materials available electronically.

- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:* Please send two copies of your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0094, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD

20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0094.

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: Additional information about APHIS and its programs is available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Natalia Weinsedel, Biotechnology Regulatory Services, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-0809, *e-mail:* natalia.a.weinsedel@aphis.usda.gov. To obtain copies of the petition or the draft environmental assessment, contact Ms. Cindy Eck at (301) 734-0667, *e-mail:* cynthia.a.eck@aphis.usda.gov. The petition and the draft environmental assessment are also available on the Internet at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/brs/aphisdocs/07_15201p.pdf and http://www.aphis.usda.gov/brs/aphisdocs/07_15201p_ea.pdf.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

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 June 1, 2007, APHIS received a petition seeking a determination of

nonregulated status (APHIS Petition Number 07-152-01p) from Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., of Johnston, IA (Pioneer), for corn (*Zea mays* L.) designated as transformation event 98140, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to glyphosate and acetolactate synthase (ALS)-inhibiting herbicides, stating that corn line 98140 is unlikely to pose a plant pest risk and, therefore, should not be a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340.

As described in the petition, the 98140 corn line has been genetically engineered to express modified glyphosate acetyltransferase (GAT4621) and modified maize acetolactate synthase (ZM-HRA) proteins. The GAT4621 protein, encoded by the *gat4621* gene, confers tolerance to glyphosate-containing herbicides by acetylating glyphosate and thus rendering it non-phytotoxic. The ZM-HRA protein, encoded by the *zm-hra* gene, confers tolerance to the ALS-inhibiting class of herbicides (e.g., sulfonylureas and imidazolinones). Expression of the *zm-hra* gene is controlled by the maize ALS (acetolactate synthase) promoter. ALS is the enzyme required for the production of essential branched-chain amino acids such as valine, leucine, and isoleucine. The *gat4621* gene is based on the sequences of three *gat* genes from *Bacillus licheniformis*, a common soil bacterium. Expression of the *gat4621* gene is driven by the corn ubiquitin promoter (*ubiZM1*). The *zm-hra* gene was made by isolating the herbicide sensitive maize ALS gene and introducing two specific changes known to confer herbicide tolerance to tobacco ALS.

The genetic insert also contains the terminator sequence from *Solanum tuberosum* (potato) and two sequences from two prevalent plant pests, cauliflower mosaic virus (enhancer) and *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* (border region). All of these sequences are well-characterized and are non-coding regulatory regions only. Therefore, these sequences will not cause the 98140 corn line to promote plant disease.

A single copy of these genes and other DNA regulatory sequences were introduced into the corn genome with the transformation vector PHP24279 using disarmed (non-plant pest causing) *A. tumefaciens* transformation of immature embryos. Plant cells containing the introduced DNA were selected by culturing in the presence of glyphosate. After the initial transformation, the antibiotic carbenicillin was included in the culture medium to kill any remaining