

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 77, No. 150

Friday, August 3, 2012

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-2012-0061]

Field Release of *Aphelinus glycinis* for the Biological Control of the Soybean Aphid in the Continental United States; 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 a draft environmental assessment has been prepared by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service relative to the proposed release of *Aphelinus glycinis* for the biological control of the soybean aphid, *Aphis glycines*, in the continental United States. We are making this environmental assessment available to the public for review and comment.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before September 4, 2012.

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

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2012-0061>.
- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:*

Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2012-0061, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

The environmental assessment and any comments we receive may be viewed at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2012-0061> or in our reading room, which 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) 799-7039 before coming.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Shirley A. Wager-Page, Chief, Pest Permitting Branch, Registration, Identification, Permitting, and Plant Safeguarding, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 134, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 851-2323.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The soybean aphid, *Aphis glycinis*, which is native to Asia, was found in North America in 2000 and has since become a major pest in America. It infested 42 million acres alone in 2003, resulting in decreased soybean yields and greatly increased control costs. The soybean aphid has invaded most soybean production regions in North America, including numerous U.S. States and three Canadian Provinces.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing to issue permits for the field release of the insect *Aphelinus glycinis* to reduce the severity of soybean damage from infestations of soybean aphid in the United States. Permitting the release of this parasite species is necessary to determine its impact on soybean aphid populations and its ability to survive in the target area.

APHIS' review and analysis of the potential environmental impacts associated with these proposed field tests are documented in detail in an environmental assessment entitled "Field Release of *Aphelinus glycinis* for the Biological Control of the Soybean Aphid in the Continental United States" (March 2012). We are making this environmental assessment available to the public for review and comment. We will consider all comments that we receive on or before the date listed under the heading **DATES** at the beginning of this notice.

The environmental assessment may be viewed on the Regulations.gov Web site or in our reading room (see **ADDRESSES** above for a link to Regulations.gov and information on the location and hours of the reading room). You may request paper copies of the environmental assessment by calling or writing to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Please

refer to the title of the environmental assessment when requesting copies.

The environmental assessment 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 30th day of July 2012.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 2012-19026 Filed 8-2-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2012-0060]

Availability of an Environmental Assessment for a Biological Control Agent for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

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 prepared an environmental assessment relative to the release of *Symnus coniferarum* to control hemlock woolly adelgid. The environmental assessment considers the effects of, and alternatives to, the release of *Symnus coniferarum* into the eastern United States for use as a biological control agent to reduce the severity of hemlock woolly adelgid infestations. 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 September 4, 2012.

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

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2012-0060-0001>.

• **Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:** Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2012-0060, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Supporting documents and any comments we receive on this docket may be viewed at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2012-0060> or in our reading room, which 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) 799-7039 before coming.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Shirley A. Wager-Page, Chief, Pest Permitting Branch, Registration, Identification, Permitting, and Plant Safeguarding, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 133, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 851-2323.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing to issue permits for the release of *Scymnus coniferarum*, a native predaceous beetle from the western United States, into the eastern United States for use as a biological control agent to reduce the severity of hemlock woolly adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*) infestations on hemlock.

Hemlock woolly adelgid was accidentally introduced to the eastern United States from Asia. Although native to the western United States, in the eastern United States, hemlock woolly adelgid is a destructive pest of the eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), where it causes needle loss, abortion of buds, and the eventual death of infested trees.

Four predatory beetles have been introduced to the eastern United States as biological controls of hemlock woolly adelgid with two of these considered established in the eastern United States. However, because hemlock woolly adelgid has a multigenerational lifestyle with multiple forms appearing at different times during the year, a group of natural predators similar to that found in areas in which it is native is needed in order to provide more efficient control. Therefore, APHIS is proposing to issue permits for the release of *S. coniferarum* into the eastern United States in order to reduce the severity and extent of hemlock woolly adelgid infestations.

The proposed biological control agent, *S. coniferarum*, is a small lady beetle

about 2 millimeters long and covered in fine, short hairs. In the wild it feeds on all hemlock woolly adelgid stages except nymphs that are in diapause during the summer. Because the larvae of *S. coniferarum* primarily target the egg stage of the hemlock woolly adelgid in late spring to early summer, the release of *S. coniferarum* will provide a predator that the spring generation of hemlock woolly adelgid currently lacks in the eastern United States.

APHIS' review and analysis of the potential environmental effects associated with the proposed action are documented in detail in an environmental assessment (EA) entitled "Release of the Predatory Beetle *Scymnus coniferarum* (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae), for Biological Control of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*) in the Eastern United States" (February 2012). We are making the EA available to the public for review and comment. We will consider all comments that we receive on or before the date listed under the heading **DATES** at the beginning of this notice.

The EA may be viewed on the Regulations.gov Web site or in our reading room. (Instructions for accessing Regulations.gov and information on the location and hours of the reading room are provided under the heading **ADDRESSES** at the beginning of this notice.) In addition, copies may be obtained by calling or writing to the individual listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

The 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 1b); and (4) APHIS= NEPA Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372).

Done in Washington, DC, this 30th day of July 2012.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 2012-19029 Filed 8-2-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2012-0044]

National Poultry Improvement Plan; General Conference Committee Meeting and 41st Biennial Conference

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: We are giving notice of a meeting of the General Conference Committee of the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) and the NPIP's 41st Biennial Conference.

DATES: The General Conference Committee meeting will be held on September 25, 2012, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. The Biennial Conference will meet on September 26, 2012, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on September 27, 2012, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Loews New Orleans Hotel, 300 Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. C. Stephen Roney, Senior Coordinator, National Poultry Improvement Plan, VS, APHIS, 1506 Klondike Road, Suite 300, Conyers, GA 30094-5173, (770) 922-3496.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The General Conference Committee (the Committee) of the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP), representing cooperating State agencies and poultry industry members, serves an essential function by acting as a liaison between the poultry

industry and the Department in matters pertaining to poultry health. The Committee meets to discuss significant poultry health issues and makes recommendations to improve the NPIP program.

Topics for discussion at the upcoming meetings include:

1. Salmonella testing.
2. Technical Committee report.
3. Avian influenza.
4. USDA regulatory review.

The meetings will be open to the public. However, due to time constraints, the public will not be allowed to provide oral comments pertaining to the discussions during either of the meetings. Written statements on meeting topics may be filed with the Committee before or after the meeting by sending them to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Written statements may also be filed at the meeting. Please refer to Docket No.