

environmental and interrelated economic issues and impacts that APHIS may determine should be considered in our evaluation of the petition. We are particularly interested in receiving comments regarding biological, cultural, or ecological issues, and we encourage the submission of scientific data, studies, or research to support your comments. We also request that, when possible, commenters provide relevant information regarding specific localities or regions as maize growth, crop management, and crop utilization may vary considerably by geographic region.

After the comment period closes, APHIS will review all written comments received during the comment period and any other relevant information. Any substantive issues identified by APHIS based on our review of the petition and our evaluation and analysis of comments will be considered in the development of our decisionmaking documents.

As part of our decisionmaking process regarding a GE organism's regulatory status, APHIS prepares a plant pest risk assessment to assess its plant pest risk and the appropriate environmental documentation—either an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS)—in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), to provide the Agency with a review and analysis of any potential environmental impacts associated with the petition request. For petitions for which APHIS prepares an EA, APHIS will follow our published process for soliciting public involvement (see footnote 1) and publish a separate notice in the **Federal Register** announcing the availability of APHIS' EA and plant pest risk assessment. Should APHIS determine that an EIS is necessary, APHIS will complete the NEPA EIS process in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508) and APHIS' NEPA implementing regulations (7 CFR part 372).

**Authority:** 7 U.S.C. 7701–7772 and 7781–7786; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

Done in Washington, DC, this 14th day of January 2015.

**Kevin Shea,**

*Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.*

[FR Doc. 2015–00722 Filed 1–16–15; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410–34–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS–2013–0043]

#### Monsanto Co.; Determination of Nonregulated Status of Herbicide Resistant Soybean and Cotton

**AGENCY:** Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** We are advising the public of our determination that soybean and cotton genetically engineered for herbicide resistance by the Monsanto Company are no longer considered regulated articles under our regulations governing the introduction of certain genetically engineered organisms. Our determination is based on our evaluation of data submitted by the Monsanto Company in its two petitions for a determination of nonregulated status, our analysis of publically available scientific data, and comments received from the public on the petition for nonregulated status and its associated environmental impact statement and plant pest risk assessments. This notice also announces the availability of our written determination and record of decision.

**DATES:** *Effective Date:* January 20, 2015.

**ADDRESSES:** You may read the documents referenced in this notice and any comments we received 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) 799–7039 before coming. Those documents are also available on the Internet at [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/petitions\\_table\\_pending.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/petitions_table_pending.shtml) under APHIS Petition Numbers 10–188–01p (soybean) and 12–185–01p (cotton) and are posted with the comments we received on the Regulations.gov Web site at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0043>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. John Turner, Director, Environmental Risk Analysis Programs, Biotechnology Regulatory Services, APHIS, 4700 River Road, Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737–1236; (301) 851–3954, email: [john.t.turner@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:john.t.turner@aphis.usda.gov). To obtain copies of the documents referenced in this notice, contact Ms. Cindy Eck at (301) 851–3892, email: [cynthia.a.eck@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:cynthia.a.eck@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 (GE) organisms and products are considered “regulated articles.”

The regulations in § 340.6(a) provide that any person may submit a petition to 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.

APHIS received two petitions (referred to below as “the petitions”) from the Monsanto Company seeking determinations of nonregulated status for soybean and cotton cultivars genetically engineered to be resistant to herbicides. The first petition, APHIS Petition Number 10–188–01p, seeks a determination of nonregulated status of soybean (*Glycine max*) designated as event MON 87708, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide dicamba. The second petition, APHIS Petition Number 12–185–01p, seeks a determination of nonregulated status of cotton (*Gossypium* spp.) designated as event MON 88701, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicides dicamba and glufosinate. The petitions state that these articles are unlikely to pose a plant pest risk and, therefore, should not be regulated articles under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340.

Notices were published<sup>1</sup> in the **Federal Register** for each petition advising the public that APHIS had received the petition and was seeking public comments on the petition. The notices also announced that APHIS would prepare either an environmental assessment or an environmental impact

<sup>1</sup> Docket No. APHIS–2012–0047 published on July 13, 2012, 77 FR 41356–41357; Docket No. APHIS–2012–0097 published on February 27, 2013, 78 FR 13308–13309. The **Federal Register** notices for the petitions and supporting and related materials, including public comments, are available at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2012-0047> and <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2012-0097>.

statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*, NEPA) to provide the Agency with a review and analysis of any potential environmental impacts associated with the petition request.

Following review of public comments, we published another notice<sup>2</sup> in the **Federal Register** on May 16, 2013 (78 FR 28796–28797, Docket No. APHIS–2013–0043), advising the public of our intent to prepare an EIS for the potential determination of nonregulated status requested by the petitions. APHIS decided to prepare an EIS in order to perform a comprehensive environmental analysis of the potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of granting determinations of nonregulated status for these two events.

### National Environmental Policy Act and Record of Decision

To provide the public with documentation of APHIS' review and analysis of the potential environmental impacts associated with a determination of nonregulated status of MON 87708 soybean and MON 88701 cotton, an EIS has been prepared in accordance with: (1) 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).

A notice of availability regarding the draft EIS prepared by APHIS was published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the **Federal Register** on August 11, 2014 (79 FR 46799, Docket No. ER–FRL–9016–4). Along with the draft EIS,<sup>3</sup> APHIS also made available the plant pest risk assessments (PPRAs) for the petitions. APHIS reviewed and evaluated all of the public comments received on the draft EIS and prepared formal responses to them as part of the final EIS.

A notice of availability regarding the final EIS prepared by APHIS was published by EPA in the **Federal Register** on December 12, 2014 (79 FR 73890, Docket No. ER–FRL–9018–4). The NEPA implementing regulations in 40 CFR 1506.10 require a minimum 30-day review period between the time the

notice of availability of a final EIS is published and the time an agency makes a decision on an action covered by the EIS. APHIS has reviewed and evaluated the comments received during the 30-day review period and has concluded that it has fully and appropriately analyzed the relevant environmental issues covered by the final EIS and those comments. Based on our final EIS, the response to public comments, and other pertinent scientific data, APHIS has prepared a record of decision for the final EIS.

### Determination of Nonregulated Status

Based on APHIS' analysis of field and laboratory data submitted by the Monsanto Company, references provided in the petitions, peer-reviewed publications, information analyzed in the EIS, the PPRAs, comments provided by the public, and APHIS' evaluation of and response to those comments, APHIS has determined that MON 87708 soybean and MON 88701 cotton are unlikely to pose a plant pest risk. Accordingly, the petitions requesting a determination of nonregulated status are approved and MON 87708 soybean and MON 88701 cotton are no longer subject to our regulations governing the introduction of certain genetically engineered organisms and to the plant pest provisions of the Plant Protection Act.

Copies of the two signed determination document and the signed record of decision, as well as copies of the final EIS and two PPRAs are available as indicated in the **ADDRESSES** and **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** sections of this notice.

**Authority:** 7 U.S.C. 7701–7772 and 7781–7786; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

Done in Washington, DC, this 13th day of January 2015.

**Michael Gregoire,**

*Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.*

[FR Doc. 2015–00723 Filed 1–16–15; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410–34–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Lassen National Forest; California; Lassen National Forest Over-Snow Vehicle Use Designation Environmental Impact Statement

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on a proposal to designate over-snow vehicle (OSV) use as allowed, restricted, or prohibited on National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and Areas on National Forest System lands within the Lassen National Forest; and to identify snow trails for grooming within the Lassen National Forest. In addition, the Forest Service proposes to:

1. Formally adopt California State Parks' OSV snow grooming standards requiring a minimum of 18 inches of snow depth before grooming can occur;
2. Implement a Forest-wide snow depth requirement for OSV use that would provide for public safety and natural and cultural resource protection by allowing OSV use in designated Areas when there is a minimum of 12 inches of snow covering the landscape; and allow OSV use on designated National Forest System roads and designated National Forest System Trails when there is a minimum of 6 inches of snow covering the road or trail; and
3. Prohibit OSV use in selected Areas and on non-motorized trails.

This proposal would be implemented on all of the Lassen National Forest.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by February 19, 2015. The draft environmental impact statement is expected in October 2015 and the final environmental impact statement is expected in September 2016.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Chris O'Brien, on behalf of Dave Hays, Forest Supervisor, Lassen National Forest, 2550 Riverside Drive, Susanville, CA 96130; 530–257–2151. Comments may also be sent via facsimile to 530–252–6463. Comments may be submitted on the Lassen National Forest OSV Designation Web page: <http://data.ecosystem-management.org/nepaweb/fs-usda-pop.php?project=45832>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Christopher O'Brien, Ph.D., Public Services and Ecosystems Staff Officer, USDA Forest Service, Lassen National Forest, 2550 Riverside Drive, Susanville, CA 96130; 530–257–2151; [cjobrien@fs.fed.us](mailto:cjobrien@fs.fed.us).

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Snow Trail Grooming Program: For over 30

<sup>2</sup> To view the notice the comments we received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0043>.

<sup>3</sup> To view the draft EIS, final EIS, supporting documents, and the comments we received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0043>.