

Rules and Regulations

Federal Register

Vol. 82, No. 211

Thursday, November 2, 2017

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains regulatory documents having general applicability and legal effect, most of which are keyed to and codified in the Code of Federal Regulations, which is published under 50 titles pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 1510.

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OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

5 CFR Part 532

Prevailing Rate Systems

CFR Correction

In Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 1 to 699, revised as of January 1, 2017, in Appendix C to Subpart B of part 532: On page 469, under NEW YORK, the wage area listing for Newburgh is removed; and on page 482, under WASHINGTON, in the Southeastern Washington-Eastern Oregon wage area listing, *Area of application. Survey area plus.*, under Washington, Columbia is added.

[FR Doc. 2017-23913 Filed 11-1-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 1301-00-D

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

7 CFR Part 301

[Docket No. APHIS-2017-0049]

Black Stem Rust; Additions of Rust-Resistant Species and Varieties

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Direct final rule; confirmation of effective date.

SUMMARY: On September 5, 2017, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service published a direct final rule. The direct final rule notified the public of our intention to amend the black stem rust quarantine and regulations by adding 15 varieties to the list of rust-resistant *Berberis* species and varieties and 2 varieties to the list of rust-resistant *Mahonia* species and varieties. We received two comments, which are addressed in this document.

DATES: The effective date of the direct final rule published September 5, 2017,

at 82 FR 41825-41827, is confirmed as November 6, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Richard N. Johnson, National Policy Manager, Black Stem Rust, Pest Management, PHP, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 26, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 851-2109.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Black stem rust is one of the most destructive plant diseases of small grains that is known to exist in the United States. The disease is caused by a fungus (*Puccinia graminis*) that reduces the quality and yield of infected wheat, oat, barley, and rye crops. In addition to infecting small grains, the fungus lives on a variety of alternate host plants that are species of the genera *Berberis*, *Mahoberberis*, and *Mahonia*. The fungus is spread from host to host by windborne spores.

The black stem rust quarantine and regulations, which are contained in 7 CFR 301.38 through 301.38-8 (referred to below as the regulations), quarantine the conterminous 48 States and the District of Columbia and govern the interstate movement of certain plants of the genera *Berberis*, *Mahoberberis*, and *Mahonia*, known as barberry plants. The species of these plants are categorized as either rust-resistant or rust-susceptible. Rust-resistant plants do not pose a risk of spreading black stem rust or of contributing to the development of new races of the rust; rust-susceptible plants do pose such risks.

On September 5, 2017, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published in the **Federal Register** (82 FR 41825-41827, Docket No. APHIS-2017-0049) a direct final rule¹ to amend the black stem rust quarantine and regulations by adding 15 varieties to the list of rust-resistant *Berberis* species and varieties and 2 varieties to the list of rust-resistant *Mahonia* species and varieties.

We solicited comments on the rule for 30 days ending October 5, 2017, and indicated that, if we received written adverse comments or written notice of intent to submit adverse comments, we would publish a document in the **Federal Register** withdrawing the direct final rule before the effective date.

We received two comments by that date, neither of which we consider to be adverse. One commenter questioned

why rust-resistant plants must be regulated—including being added to the black stem rust quarantine and regulations list, as well as being accompanied by a certificate if moved interstate—if they do not pose a risk of spreading black stem rust.

APHIS' quarantine of the 48 conterminous States and the District of Columbia and restrictions on the interstate movement of *Berberis*, *Mahoberberis*, and *Mahonia* spp. plants are imposed to ensure that those plants do not pose a risk of spreading black stem rust or contributing to the development of new races of the rust. All plants of the genera *Berberis*, *Mahoberberis*, and *Mahonia* are considered regulated articles, though aspects of their regulation may vary depending on their designation as either rust-resistant or rust-susceptible. Certificates that accompany rust-resistant species of barberry plants serve as a means to identify them and allow for their interstate movement into or through designated protected areas as defined in the regulations; rust-susceptible species of barberry plants are prohibited from such movement interstate.

The other commenter questioned the reliability of testing protocols to determine a plant's rust resistance, and requested assurance based on evidence that the sample size used to determine rust resistance is adequate to determine an overall species' resistance.

Testing performed by the Agricultural Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) at its Cereal Disease Laboratory in St. Paul, MN has been used to effectively determine rust resistance for more than 50 years. Based on our extensive experience with this test, we believe that 12—in any of the combinations described in the direct final rule—is the reliable test sample size on which USDA can make its determination. We do not know of any plant that was subsequently discovered to be rust-susceptible after undergoing the test procedure 12 times and being determined by USDA to be rust-resistant.

Therefore, for the reasons given in the direct final rule and in this document, we are confirming the effective date as November 6, 2017.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 7701-7772 and 7781-7786; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

¹ To view the direct final rule and the comments received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#/docketDetail;D=APHIS-2017-0049>.

Section 301.75–15 issued under Sec. 204, Title II, Public Law 106–113, 113 Stat. 1501A–293; sections 301.75–15 and 301.75–16 issued under Sec. 203, Title II, Public Law 106–224, 114 Stat. 400 (7 U.S.C. 1421 note).

Done in Washington, DC, this 30th day of October 2017.

Michael C. Gregoire,
Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 2017–23897 Filed 11–1–17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Rural Utilities Service

7 CFR Part 4279

Guaranteed Loanmaking

CFR Correction

In Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2000 to End, revised as of January 1, 2017, on page 749, § 4279.162 is added to read as follows:

§ 4279.162 Strategic economic and community development.

Applicants with projects that support the implementation of strategic economic development and community development plans are encouraged to review and consider 7 CFR part 1980, subpart K, which contains provisions for providing priority to projects that support the implementation of strategic economic development and community development plans on a Multi-jurisdictional basis.

[81 FR 10457, Mar. 1, 2016]

[FR Doc. 2017–23912 Filed 11–1–17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 1301–00–D

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

38 CFR Part 4

RIN 2900–AO44

Schedule for Rating Disabilities; The Endocrine System

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This document amends the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) by revising the portion of the Schedule that addresses endocrine conditions and disorders of the endocrine system. The effect of this action is to ensure that the VASRD uses current medical terminology and to

provide detailed and updated criteria for evaluation of endocrine disorders.

DATES: This rule is effective on December 10, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ioulia Vvedenskaya, Medical Officer, Part 4 VASRD Regulations Staff (211C), Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420, Ioulia.Vvedenskaya@va.gov, (202) 461–9700 (this is not a toll-free telephone number).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: VA published a proposed rule in the **Federal Register** at 80 FR 39011 on July 8, 2015, to amend the portion of the VASRD dealing with endocrine disorders. VA provided a 60-day public comment period, and interested persons were invited to submit written comments, suggestions, or objections on or before September 8, 2015. VA received comments from four individuals. In addition, VA received a comment from a veterans service organization. Unless otherwise indicated below, VA adopts the changes set forth in the proposed rule.

Public Comments

One commenter asked whether VA would recognize polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) under the VA rating schedule. VA has a mechanism in place to address PCOS under 38 CFR 4.116. Specifically, the rating schedule for Gynecological Conditions and Disorders of the Breast addresses various ovarian conditions under Diagnostic Code (DC) 7615, “Ovary, disease, injury, or adhesions of” and allows VA to rate based on whether symptoms are controlled by or require continuous treatment. In exceptional cases where the schedular evaluation is inadequate, 38 CFR 3.321 allows for extraschedular evaluation. Therefore, VA makes no changes based on this comment.

Two commenters proposed additional modifications to DC 7913, “Diabetes mellitus.” One commenter suggested adding a note to address the issue of regulation of activities. Another commenter suggested not changing the insulin requirements within DC 7913 without considering the other requirements in the DC such as regulation of activities. The same commenter suggested removing the insulin requirement for a 20-percent rating and the regulation of activities requirement at all disability ratings under the DC. The commenter stated that the functional impairment caused by required use of insulin is greater than impairment caused by ingestion of oral

medication to control diabetes. As stated in the proposed rule, VA is not proposing any change to the evaluation criteria for DC 7913 at this time other than requiring “one or more daily injection” of insulin for a 20-, 40- or 60-percent rating and instead intends to establish a work group to specifically address this condition. Therefore, these comments are beyond the scope of this rulemaking. However, VA will take these comments into consideration in connection with a possible future rulemaking.

One commenter suggested changing the terminology for a 100-percent rating under DC 7903, “Hypothyroidism” from “myxedema” to “myxedema coma or crisis” because myxedema can be present without causing the requisite level of symptoms for a 100-percent rating. Myxedema is a term used to denote severe hypothyroidism, and myxedema coma or myxedema crisis is a medical emergency and represents a specific rare life-threatening clinical condition. Because the clinical picture of myxedema appears in the most extreme cases of hypothyroidism, we believe that this manifestation of the disability warrants a 100-percent rating (See Greenspan’s Basic & Clinical Endocrinology (D.G. Gardner et al. eds., 9th ed. 2011) available at <http://accessmedicine.mhmedical.com/content.aspx?bookid=380§ionid=39744047#8401831>). Therefore, VA makes no changes based on this comment.

The same commenter proposed that VA retain a 10-percent minimum evaluation in the DCs for endocrine disabilities because of the need for continuous medication to control the symptoms of these disabilities. VA disagrees. In the absence of symptoms, medical management of chronic endocrine disorders does not present a significant lifestyle adjustment, and it does not result in impairment of earning capacity (see 38 U.S.C. 1155). Therefore, VA makes no changes based on this comment.

The same commenter noted a typographical error in the text of proposed DC 7911. The word “adrenocortical” was misspelled as “adrenalcortical.” VA has changed the spelling of the term based on this comment.

One commenter was supportive of the overall changes and additions to this section of the VASRD, such as additional DCs, clarification of notes on residuals affecting other body systems, instructions to rate some residuals separately, accounting for additional symptoms, and formation of a new work group for diabetes mellitus. The