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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

Notice of Request for a Revision to and Extension of an Information Collection; Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Agency Service Delivery

AGENCY: Office of the Chief Information Officer, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Office of the Chief Information Officer, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the public to comment on the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Agency Service Delivery” for approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act. This collection was developed as part of a Federal Government-wide effort to streamline the process for seeking feedback from the public on service delivery. This notice announces our intent to submit this collection to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for approval and solicit comments on specific aspects for the proposed information collection.

DATES: Consideration will be given to all comments received by February 5, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments by one of the following methods:

- *Web site:* www.regulations.gov.
- *Email:* Ruth.Brown@ocio.usda.gov and
- *Fax:* 202–692–0203.

Comments submitted in response to this notice may be made available to the public. For this reason, please do not include in your comments information of a confidential nature, such as sensitive personal information (PII) or proprietary information. If you send an email comment, your email address will be automatically captured and included as part of the comment that is placed in the public docket and made available on the Internet. Please note that responses

to this public comment request containing any routine notice about the confidentiality of the communication will be treated as public comments that may be made available to the public notwithstanding the inclusion of the routine notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ruth Brown, 202–720–8958.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Agency Service Delivery.

Abstract: The proposed information collection activity provides a means to garner qualitative customer and stakeholder feedback in an efficient, timely manner, in accordance with the Administration’s commitment to improve service delivery. By qualitative feedback, we mean information that provides useful insights on perceptions and opinions, but are not statistical surveys that yield quantitative results that can be generalized to the population. This feedback will, (1) provide insights into customer or stakeholder perceptions, experiences and expectations, (2) provide an early warning of issues with service and, (3) focus attention on areas where communication, training or changes in operations might improve delivery of products or services. This collection will allow for ongoing, collaborative and actionable communications between the Agency and its customers and stakeholders. It will also allow feedback to contribute directly to the improvement of program management.

The solicitation of feedback will target areas such as: Timeliness, appropriateness, accuracy of information, courtesy, efficiency of service delivery, and resolution of issues with service delivery. Responses will be assessed to plan and inform efforts to improve or maintain the quality of service offered to the public. If this information is not collected, vital feedback from customers and stakeholders on the Agency’s services will be unavailable.

The Agency will only submit a collection for approval under this generic clearance if it meets the following conditions:

- The collections are voluntary;
- The collections are low-burden for respondents (based on considerations of total burden hours, total number of respondents, or burden-hours per respondent) and are low-

cost for both the respondents and the Federal Government;

- The collections are non-controversial and do not raise issues of concern to other Federal agencies;
- Any collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future;
- Personally identifiable information (PII) is collected only to the extent necessary and is not retained;
- Information gathered will be used only internally for general service improvement and program management purposes and is not intended for release outside of the agency;
- Information gathered will not be used for substantially informing influential policy decisions; and
- Information gathered will yield qualitative information; the collections will not be designed or expected to yield statistically reliable results or used as though the results are generalizable to the population of study.

Feedback collected under this generic clearance provides useful information, but it does not yield data that can be generalized to the overall population. This type of generic clearance for qualitative information will not be used for quantitative information collections that are designed to yield reliably actionable results, such as monitoring trends over time or documenting program performance. Such data usage requires more rigorous designs that address the target population to which generalizations will be made, the sampling frame, the sample design (including stratification and clustering), the precision requirements or power calculations that justify the proposed sample size, the expected response rate, methods for assessing potential non-response bias, the protocols for data collection, and any testing procedures that were or will be undertaken prior to fielding the study. Depending on the degree of influence the results are likely to have, such collections may still be eligible for submission for other generic mechanisms that are designed to yield quantitative results.

As a general matter, information collections will not result in any new system of records containing privacy information and will not ask questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

Current Actions: Revision/Extension of approval for a collection of information.

Type of Review: Revision.

Affected Public: Individuals and Households, Businesses and Organizations, State, Local or Tribal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 30,000.

Below we provide projected average estimates for the next 3-years:

Average Expected Annual Number of Activities: 20.

Average Number of Respondents per Activity: 1.

Annual Responses: 30,000.

Frequency of Response: Once per request.

Average Minutes per Response: 30.

Burden Hours: 15,000.

Request for Comments: Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance, and purchase of services to provide information. Burden means the total time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, disclose, or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions to (1) develop, acquire, install, and utilize technology and systems for the purpose of collecting, validating and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; (2) train personnel and be able to respond to a collection of information, to search data sources, (3) complete and review the collection of information; and to transmit or otherwise disclose the information.

All written comments will be available for public inspection at *Regulations.gov*. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a

currently valid Office of Management and Budget control number.

Gary Washington,

Acting Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 2017-26109 Filed 12-4-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-KR-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2017-0086]

Availability of an Environmental Assessment for Release of *Aceria drabae* for Biological Control of Hoary Cress

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has prepared an environmental assessment relative to permitting the release of *Aceria drabae* for biological control of hoary cress in the continental United States. The environmental assessment considers the effects of, and alternatives to, the field release of a mite, *Aceria drabae*, into the contiguous United States for use as a biological control agent to reduce the severity of hoary cress 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 January 4, 2018.

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

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2017-0086>.

- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:* Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2017-0086, 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-2017-0086> 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. Colin D. Stewart, Assistant Director, Pests, Pathogens, and Biocontrol Permits, Permitting and Compliance Coordination, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 133, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 851-2237; email: Colin.Stewart@aphis.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Hoary cress species (*Lepidium draba*, *L. appelianum*, and *L. chalapense*) are herbaceous, perennial plants that grow in a variety of habitat and soil types. The hoary cress complex of invasive weeds is native to the Balkans, the Caspian Sea region of southwestern Asia, and the Middle East, and is found throughout Europe. Hoary cress was introduced into the United States from Europe in the late 19th century either with ship ballast or contaminated alfalfa, grass, or grain. Since then, hoary cress has spread to all regions of the United States except the Southeast.

Hoary cress is a perennial weed that reproduces from seeds and a spreading root system. The root system consists of vertical and lateral roots from which rosettes and shoots arise. Hoary cress inhibits and diminishes recreational opportunities, directly impedes crop production, minimizes grazing potential of affected rangelands, degrades wildlife habitat and native plant communities, and restricts waterfowl use of wetlands and stream banks. As a result, farmers, ranchers, recreationists, sportsmen, hunters, and the general public are adversely affected by hoary cress.

Aceria drabae, a mite, was chosen as a potential biological control agent to combat hoary cress due to its very narrow host range and impact on its host, and since the mite is relatively widespread in Europe, it should adapt to varying environmental conditions in North America. The applicant's purpose for releasing *A. drabae* is to reduce the severity of infestations of invasive hoary cress in the contiguous United States.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS') review and analysis of the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed release are documented in detail in an environmental assessment (EA) entitled "Field release of the gall mite, *Aceria drabae* (Acari: Eriophyidae), for classical biological control of hoary cress (*Lepidium draba* L., *Lepidium chalapense* L., and *Lepidium appelianum* Al-Shehbaz) (Brassicaceae), in the contiguous United States" (September 2017). 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