

Notices

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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

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 97-049-1]

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Approved information collection extension; 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 a currently approved information collection in support of the National Poultry Improvement Plan.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by September 9, 1997 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Send comments regarding the accuracy of burden estimate, ways to minimize the burden (such as through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology), or any other aspect of this collection of information to: Docket No. 97-049-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, suite 3C03, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please send an original and three copies, and state that your comments refer to Docket 97-049-1. Comments received may be inspected at USDA, room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing to inspect comments are requested to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the comment reading room.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: For information regarding the National Poultry Improvement Plan, contact Mr.

Andrew Rhorer, National Poultry Improvement Plan Coordinator, Operational Support, VS, APHIS, 1500 Klondike Road, Suite A-102, Conyers, GA 30207, (770) 922-3496. For copies of more detailed information on the information collection, contact Ms. Celeste Sickles, Agency Support Service Specialist, at (301) 734-7477.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: National Poultry Improvement Plan.

OMB Number: 0579-0007.

Expiration Date of Approval: November 30, 1997.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) is a voluntary Federal-State cooperative program for the improvement of poultry breeding flocks and products through disease control techniques. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is responsible for administering the NPIP, the primary purpose of which is to protect the health of the U.S. poultry population.

Administering the NPIP requires us to engage in a number of information collection activities, which are described below. We are asking the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve the continued use of these information collection activities, which are critical to our ability to prevent the spread of contagious poultry diseases within the United States.

Flock Selecting and Testing Report (VS Form 9-2)

This form is used by authorized agents and State inspectors when breeding flocks are selected and tested. The form provides space for the number of birds tested and the results of the test. This form also identifies a given flock as to owner, hatchery affiliation, stock, type, purpose, classification, and most importantly, flock location. Since most of the flocks are supply flocks for the same hatchery, it is extremely important to know the location of the flock. The information on this form is of critical importance when an investigation must be conducted to determine the source of a hatchery-disseminated or egg-transmitted disease.

Report of Sales of Hatching Eggs, Chicks, and Poult (VS Form 9-3)

NPIP participants use this form to record any interstate sales of their hatching eggs, chicks, and poults. This document is used by both APHIS and the receiving State to monitor the movements of these items. This form also serves as a vital investigative aid when APHIS is attempting to track down the source of a poultry disease. These records must be maintained by producers for 3 years.

Summary of Breeding Flock Participation (VS Form 9-4)

This report form, which is completed by State animal health authorities, contains a summary of blood testing work and of flock participation by classes and breeding status. It is distributed to official State agencies from our offices at the end of the testing year in June and must be returned to us in July. With this information, we can publish our Tables on Hatchery and Flock Participation, which serve as an important tool in monitoring the health status of participating flocks.

Report of NPIP Hatchery Participation or Change (VS Form 9-5)

This form is completed by the official State Agency to record an NPIP participant's decision to withdraw from the program, or to record a producer's decision to join the program. This document is also used to record a change in disease program classification. This form allows us to effectively monitor participation in the NPIP, and to maintain an up-to-date list of program participants, their addresses, and other important information concerning their poultry operations.

Investigation of Salmonella and Arizona Isolations (VS Form 9-7)

If a multi-State disease outbreak occurs, the NPIP will conduct an investigation and share the resulting information with all the States involved. VS Form 9-7 is one of the tools used to complete this investigation; it provides the investigating State agency with a uniform method of compiling and analyzing information that can subsequently be used to study trends, economic importance, and other matters. This form is arranged in sections so that the disease investigations can be completed in

stages by different inspectors, depending upon the location of the flock, hatchery, and breeding flock. The inspector obtains some of the needed information by interviewing the appropriate poultry producers. When several States are involved in a pullorum-typhoid infection, the completed form will be sent to each of the States involved so that all of them will be aware of the investigation's outcome.

Sentinel Birds Banded for Identification Prior to Flock Vaccination

When a Federally licensed *Salmonella enteritidis* bacterin is used to vaccinate a flock, 350 birds must remain unvaccinated so that they can be used to conduct the necessary serological tests for *Salmonella pullorum* and *Salmonella gallinarum*. These test birds must be banded so that they can be recognized as sentinel birds. A report is submitted annually to APHIS, from the various States, with information from their participants and data required by the various disease control programs of the NPIP.

Request for Salmonella Serotyping (VS Form 10-3)

This is a National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) form that must be completed by State or APHIS personnel who are submitting samples for salmonella serotyping. If samples were sent to NVSL without this form, lab personnel would have no way of identifying any given sample as to the flock from which it came, or even the disease for which the sample is to be tested.

Printing and Mailing Computerized Printouts

These printouts are constructed by hatchery operators who ship large numbers of small chick orders all across the United States. These computerized lists contain all the information found on a VS 9-3, but reduce the paperwork load substantially because they are computer generated. These printouts are sent every month to those States that request them. The States use these printouts to monitor the number of small chicks they are receiving.

The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public (as well as affected agencies) concerning our information collection. We need this outside input to help us:

(1) Evaluate whether the proposed 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 proposed 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: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .165 hours per response.

Respondents: Flock owners, breeders, hatchery operators, and State veterinary medical officers.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 9,075.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 5.139.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 7,695 hours.

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 7th day of July 1997.

Craig A. Reed,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 97-18204 Filed 7-10-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 97-066-1]

Genetically Engineered Virus Resistant Plants; Public Meeting

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will hold a meeting to discuss several issues related to the use of transgenes from plant viruses in the development of genetically engineered plants. The meeting will be operated as a workshop, and we request that interested persons register 2 weeks before the meeting date.

DATES: The meeting will be held in Riverdale, MD, on Tuesday, August 5, 1997, from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in Training Room 4 at the USDA Center at

Riverside, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information about the agenda and to register for the meeting, contact Dr. James White, Biotechnology and Scientific Services, PPQ, APHIS, Suite 5B05, 4700 River Road Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236, (301) 734-5940; or e-mail: jwhite@aphis.usda.gov. Information about the meeting is also available on the Internet at the APHIS World Wide Web site: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotech>.

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 organisms and products are considered "regulated articles." Before introducing a regulated article, a person is required under § 340.0 of the regulations to either (1) notify the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in accordance with § 340.3 or (2) obtain a permit in accordance with § 340.4. The regulations in § 340.6 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. In this regard, APHIS believes it appropriate to review any new scientific issues associated with the release of certain genetically engineered organisms when questions arise concerning the use of such organisms in the environment.

To provide an opportunity for a discussion of the scientific issues surrounding the development of certain virus resistant plants, APHIS has scheduled a workshop to be held in Riverdale, MD, on August 5, 1997. Three issues will be addressed in the meeting.

(1) Some plant viruses replicate in a limited number of plant cells. If a plant is engineered to be resistant using one of the genes from these viruses and the transgene is produced in all the plant cells, does this raise the likelihood of a new virus appearing via recombination?

(2) The next generation of genetically engineered virus resistant plants may contain several transgenes derived from one virus, e.g., replicase and coat protein. Does the presence of a larger