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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On October 5, 1998, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) received a petition (APHIS Petition No. 98-278-01p) from AgrEvo USA Company (AgrEvo) of Wilmington, DE, seeking a determination that canola (*Brassica napus* L.) designated as In Vigor® Hybrid Canola Transformation Events MS8 and RF3 (transformation events), which have been genetically engineered for male sterility (MS8), fertility restoration (RF3), and tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate (both MS8 and RF3), do not present a plant pest risk and, therefore, are not regulated articles under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340.

On December 8, 1998, APHIS published a notice in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 67643-67644, Docket No. 98-114-1) announcing that the AgrEvo petition had been received and was available for public review. The notice also discussed the role of APHIS, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Food and Drug Administration in regulating the subject canola transformation events and food products derived from them. In the notice, APHIS solicited written comments from the public as to whether these canola transformation events posed a plant pest risk. The comments were to have been received by APHIS on or before February 8, 1999. APHIS received no comments on the subject petition during the designated 60-day comment period.

Analysis

The subject transformation events have been genetically engineered to contain a *barnase* gene (MS8) for male sterility or a *barstar* gene (RF3) for fertility restoration. The *barnase* gene expresses a ribonuclease that blocks pollen development and results in a male sterile plant, and the *barstar* gene encodes a specific inhibitor of this ribonuclease and restores fertility. The *barnase* and *barstar* genes were derived from *Bacillus amyloliquefaciens*, and are linked in the subject transformation events to the *bar* gene derived from *Streptomyces hygroscopicus*. The *bar* gene encodes the enzyme phosphinothricin-N-acetyltransferase (PAT), which confers tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate. The herbicide tolerance trait allows for selection of plants carrying the linked genes for pollination control during breeding and for tolerance to the herbicide during commercial cultivation. Expression of the added genes is controlled in part by

gene sequences derived from *Arabidopsis thaliana*, *Nicotiana tabacum*, and the plant pathogen *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*. The *A. tumefaciens* method was used to transfer the added genes into the parental canola variety, Drakkar.

Canola transformation events MS8, RF3, and their hybrid combination MS8/RF3 have been considered regulated articles under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340 because they contain gene sequences derived from a plant pathogen. However, evaluation of field data reports from field tests of these canola transformation events conducted under APHIS permits and notifications since 1997 indicates that there were no deleterious effects on plants, nontarget organisms, or the environment as a result of the environmental release of the subject canola transformation events.

Determination

Based on its analysis of the data submitted by AgrEvo and a review of other scientific data and field tests of the subject canola, APHIS has determined that canola transformation events MS8, RF3, and their hybrid combination MS8/RF3: (1) Exhibit no plant pathogenic properties; (2) are no more likely to become weeds than canola developed by traditional breeding techniques and are unlikely to increase the weediness potential for any other cultivated or wild species with which they can interbreed; (3) will not cause damage to raw or processed agricultural commodities; (4) will not harm threatened or endangered species or other organisms, such as bees, that are beneficial to agriculture; and (5) are unlikely to have any significant adverse impact on agricultural practices. Therefore, APHIS has concluded that the subject canola transformation events and any progeny derived from hybrid crosses with other canola varieties will be as safe to grow as canola in breeding programs that are not subject to regulation under 7 CFR part 340.

The effect of this determination is that AgrEvo's canola transformation events MS8, RF3, and their hybrid combination MS8/RF3 are no longer considered regulated articles under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340. Therefore, the requirements pertaining to regulated articles under those regulations no longer apply to the subject canola transformation events or their progeny. However, importation of these canola transformation events or seeds capable of propagation are still subject to the restrictions found in APHIS' foreign quarantine notices in 7 CFR part 319.

National Environmental Policy Act

An environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared to examine the potential environmental impacts associated with this determination. The EA was 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). Based on that EA, APHIS has reached a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) with regard to its determination that AgrEvo's canola transformation events MS8, RF3, and their hybrid combination MS8/RF3 and lines developed from them are no longer regulated articles under its regulations in 7 CFR part 340. Copies of the EA and the FONSI are available upon request from the individual listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Done in Washington, DC, this 24th day of March 1999.

Craig A. Reed,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 99-7803 Filed 3-30-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Notice of Intent To Request an Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), this notice announces the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service's (CSREES) intention to request an extension of a currently approved information collection in support of Authorizations to use the 4-H Club Name and/or Emblem that expires May 31, 1999.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received on or before June 4, 1999 to be assured for consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Contact Dr. Alma C. Hobbs; Deputy

Administrator; Families, 4-H, and Nutrition; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2225; Telephone: (202) 720-2908; E-mail: ahobbs@reeusda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Application for Authorization to Use the 4-H Name and/or Emblem.

OMB Number: 0524-0034.

Expiration Date of Approval: May 31, 1999.

Type of Request: Intent to extend a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: Use of the 4-H Name and/or Emblem is authorized by an Act of Congress, (Pub. L. 772, 80th Congress, Chapter 654, 2nd Session). Use of the 4-H Name and/or Emblem by anyone other than the 4-H Clubs and those duly authorized by them, representatives of the Department of Agriculture, the Land-Grant colleges and universities, and persons authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture is prohibited by the provisions of 18 U.S.C. 707. The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated authority to the Administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service to authorize others to use the 4-H Name and Emblem. The Administrator has promulgated regulations at 7 CFR Part 8 that govern such use. The regulatory requirements for use of the 4-H Name and/or Emblem reflect the high standards of 4-H and its educational goals and objectives. Anyone requesting authorization from the Administrator to use the 4-H Name and Emblem is asked to describe the proposed use in a formal application. The collection of this information is used to determine whether the applicant's proposed use will meet the regulatory requirements and whether an authorization for use should be granted.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .50 hours per response.

Respondents: Individuals or households, business or other for profit, not-for-profit institutions.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 40.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 20 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Dr. Nancy Valentine, National 4-H Program Leader, 202-720-2908, nvalentine@reeusda.gov.

Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) 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; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: Dr. Alma C. Hobbs; Deputy Administrator; Families, 4-H, and Nutrition; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2225; Telephone: (202) 720-2908; Email: ahobbs@reeusda.gov.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request to OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Done at Washington, DC, on this 25th day of March, 1999.

Colien Hefferan,

Acting Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.
[FR Doc. 99-7819 Filed 3-30-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Texas Blowdown Reforestation Project, National Forests and Grasslands in Texas, Angelina, Montgomery, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, and Walker Counties, Texas

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, National Forests and Grasslands in Texas (NFGT) will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess and disclose the environmental effects of site preparation and reforestation on windstorm-damaged areas in the Angelina, Sabine, and Sam Houston National Forests. The proposed actions include site preparation using

mechanical methods and prescribed fire, alone or in combination, followed by natural regeneration and/or planting on about 32,750 acres of windstorm-damaged forests. The project will be implemented in accordance with the direction in the 1996 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (the Plan) for the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas. Project activities will take place within Management Area 1—Upland Forest Ecosystems and Management Area 2—Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) Emphasis.

In addition to the management activities proposed for reforestation, the EIS will assess and disclose the effects of amending the forest plan to allocate an additional 7,300 acres to Management Area 2 on the Sabine National Forest due to the changed conditions caused by the windstorm.

DATES: Written comments and suggestions concerning the scope of the analysis must be postmarked or received by April 30, 1999. The estimated date for filing the draft EIS is June 1999, followed by the final decision in September 1999.

ADDRESSES: The Responsible Official is Ronnie Raum, Forest Supervisor; National Forests and Grasslands in Texas; 701 North First Street; Lufkin, TX 75901. Written comments and suggestions concerning the scope of analysis may be sent to him at that address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Keith Baker, Project Environmental Coordinator. Phone: 409-344-6205 (New Waverly, TX).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On the afternoon of February 10, 1998, a storm with hurricane-force winds struck the forests of deep east Texas. Approximately 103,000 acres of national forest land on the Angelina, Sabine, and Sam Houston National Forests were damaged by the windstorm. The Forest Service categorized the storm damage severity and extent on the three affected national forests as follows:

- Extensive damage—loss of greater than 60 percent of the existing trees (11,600 acres),
- Moderate damage—loss of 30 to 60 percent of the existing trees (65,400 acres), and
- Light damage—loss of 10 to 30 percent of the existing trees (26,000 acres).

The majority of lands affected by the storm are allocated under the Plan to Management Area 1 (upland forest ecosystems) and Management Area 2 (red-cockaded woodpecker emphasis). Other Management Areas (MAs) were also affected, including MA-4