

In accordance with the provisions of section 3A of the Commodity Distribution Reform Act (Act) and WIC Amendments of 1987 (7 U.S.C. 612c note) as added by section 1773 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 1421 note) and 7 CFR part 250, USDA acts as the administering agency for the implementation and operation of the SOC Program. This legislation allows the Secretary broad authority to establish regulatory provision promoting accountability in the use of USDA commodities by Federal, State, and private agencies.

This program was previously administered by the Food and Consumer Service (FCS). Effective school year 1997-98, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will assume the responsibility for administering the SOC Program.

The collection of information for the program is currently approved under OMB number 0584-0293. The expiration date of this approval is September 30, 1997.

The information collection and record keeping requirements in this request are essential in the administration of the SOC Program.

The information collected is used only by authorized representatives of the USDA. The information is used to assure compliance with the Act and the provisions of the SOC Federal-State agreement.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2.00 hours per response.

Respondents: State or local governments.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 20.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.00

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 40 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Connie Helms, Commodity Procurement Branch, at (202) 720-7693.

Send Comments regarding, but not limited to, the following: (a) Whether the 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 burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the

information to be collected; or (d) ways to minimize the burden of the 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, to: Catherine V. Smith, Acting Chief, USDA/AMS/Poultry Division, Room 3943-S, 1400 Independence Avenue S.W., STOP 0260, Washington, DC 20250-0260.

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.

Dated: June 5, 1997.

Michael D. Holbrook,

Director, Poultry Division, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 97-15254 Filed 6-10-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 97-044-1]

Availability of Environmental Assessments and Findings of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that three environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact have been prepared by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service relative to the issuance of permits to allow the field testing of genetically engineered organisms. The environmental assessments provide a basis for our conclusion that the field testing of the genetically engineered organisms will not present a risk of introducing or disseminating a plant pest and will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Based on its findings of no significant impact, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has determined that environmental impact statements need not be prepared.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact are available for public inspection 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 those documents are requested to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the reading room.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Arnold Foudin, Deputy Director, Biotechnology Evaluation, BSS, PPQ, APHIS, Suite 5B05, 4700 River Road Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737-1237; (301) 734-7612. For copies of the environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact, contact Mr. Clayton Givens at (301) 734-7612; e-mail: cgivens@aphis.usda.gov. Please refer to the permit numbers listed below when ordering the documents.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The regulations in 7 CFR part 340 (referred to below as the regulations) regulate the introduction (importation, interstate movement, and release into the environment) of genetically engineered organisms and products that are plant pests or that there is reason to believe are plant pests (regulated articles). A permit must be obtained or a notification acknowledged before a regulated article may be introduced into the United States. The regulations set forth the permit application requirements and the notification procedures for the importation, interstate movement, and release into the environment of a regulated article.

In the course of reviewing each permit application, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) assessed the impact on the environment that releasing the organisms under the conditions described in the permit application would have. APHIS has issued permits for the field testing of the organisms listed below after concluding that the organisms will not present a risk of plant pest introduction or dissemination and will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. The environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact, which are based on data submitted by the applicant and on a review of other relevant literature, provide the public with documentation of APHIS' review and analysis of the environmental impacts associated with conducting the field tests.

Environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact have been prepared by APHIS relative to the issuance of permits to allow the field testing of the following genetically engineered organisms:

Permit No.	Permittee	Date Issued	Organisms	Field test location
96-355-01	Applied Phytologics, Incorporated.	3-31-97	Rice plants genetically engineered to express proteins of pharmaceutical interest.	California.
97-023-01	Auburn University	3-31-97	<i>Pseudomonas syringae</i> pv. <i>tomato</i> strain DC3000 genetically engineered for decreased virulence.	Alabama.
97-044-02	Betaseed, Incorporated	4-25-97	Sugar beet plants genetically engineered to express virus resistance and a marker gene.	Idaho.

The environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact have been prepared in accordance with: (1) The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) (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).

Done in Washington, DC, this 4th day of June 1997.

Terry L. Medley,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 97-15257 Filed 6-10-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 97-027-1]

International Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standard-Setting Activities

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and solicitation of comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with legislation implementing the Uruguay Round of the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade, we are informing the public of international standard-setting activities of the Office International des Epizooties, the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention, and the North American Plant Protection Organization, and we are soliciting public comment on the standards to be considered.

ADDRESSES: Please send an original and three copies of your comments to Docket No. 97-027-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Suite 3C03, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state in your letter that your comments refer to Docket No. 97-027-1, and state the name of the committee

or working group to which your comments are addressed. 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 CONTACT: Mr. John Greifer, Acting Director, Trade Support Team, International Services, APHIS, room 1128, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC, 20250, (202) 720-7677; or e-mail jgreifer@aphis.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Legislation implementing the Uruguay Round of the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (the Uruguay Round Agreements Act) was signed into law (Pub. L. 103-465) by the President on December 8, 1994. The Uruguay Round Agreements Act amended title IV of the Trade Agreements Act of 1979 (19 U.S.C. 2531 *et seq.*) by adding a new subtitle F, "International Standard-Setting Activities." Subtitle F requires the President to designate an agency to be responsible for informing the public of the sanitary and phytosanitary standard-setting activities of each international standard-setting organization. The designated agency must inform the public by publishing a notice in the **Federal Register**, which provides the following information: (1) The sanitary or phytosanitary standards under consideration or planned for consideration by the international standard-setting organization; and (2) for each sanitary or phytosanitary standard specified: a description of the consideration or planned consideration of the standard; whether the United States is participating or plans to participate in the consideration of the standard; the agenda for United States participation, if any; and the agency responsible for representing the United States with respect to the standard.

Subtitle F defines "international standard" as a standard, guideline, or recommendation: (1) Adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission regarding food safety; (2) developed

under the auspices of the Office International des Epizooties regarding animal health and zoonoses; (3) developed under the auspices of the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention in cooperation with the North American Plant Protection Organization regarding plant health; or (4) established by or developed under any other international organization agreed to by the member countries of the North American Free Trade Agreement or by member countries of the World Trade Organization.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) was created in 1962 by two United Nations organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization. It is the major international organization for encouraging international trade in food and protecting the health and economic interests of consumers.

The Office International des Epizooties (OIE) was created in Paris, France, in 1924, with the signing of an international agreement by 28 countries. The OIE facilitates intergovernmental cooperation to prevent the spread of contagious diseases in animals, assists in the development of animal production through improved health information, and shares scientific progress among its members. The OIE provides the major international forum for discussion and agreement on recommendations and proposals on topics such as disease control, technical cooperation, trade standards, and the exchange of research and disease information.

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), in effect since 1952, is a multilateral treaty, administered by FAO, that promotes " * * * common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products and to promote measures for their control (IPPC Preamble)." The IPPC Secretariat, established within the FAO in 1993, works with plant protection organizations at the national and regional levels to harmonize plant quarantine activities worldwide, facilitate the dissemination of phytosanitary information, strengthen