

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. 98-041-2]

Secretary's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: We are giving notice that the Secretary of Agriculture intends to reestablish the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases for a 2-year period. The Secretary of Agriculture has determined that the Committee is necessary and in the public interest.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Joe Anelli, Chief Staff Veterinarian, Emergency Programs, Veterinary Services, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 41, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231, (301) 734-8073.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases is to advise the Secretary of Agriculture regarding program operations and measures to suppress, control, or eradicate an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, or other destructive foreign animal or poultry diseases, in the event these diseases should enter the United States. The Committee also advises the Secretary of Agriculture of means to prevent these diseases.

Done in Washington, DC, this 9th day of October 1998.

Reba Pittman Evans,

Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration.

[FR Doc. 98-27827 Filed 10-15-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-089-1]

Monsanto Co.; Receipt of Petition for Determination of Nonregulated Status for Canola Genetically Engineered for Glyphosate Herbicide Tolerance

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has received a petition from Monsanto Company seeking a determination of nonregulated status for a canola line designated as RT73, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate. The petition has been submitted in accordance with our regulations concerning the introduction of certain genetically engineered organisms and products. In accordance with those regulations, we are soliciting public comments on whether this canola line presents a plant pest risk.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before December 15, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Please send an original and three copies of your comments to Docket No. 98-089-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Suite 3C03, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comments refer to Docket No. 98-089-1. A copy of the petition and any 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 access to that room to inspect the petition or comments are asked to call in advance of visiting at (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the reading room.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Subhash Gupta, Biotechnology and Biological Analysis, PPQ, APHIS, Suite 4C46, 4700 River Road Unit 133, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-8761. To obtain a copy of the petition, contact Ms. Kay Peterson at (301) 734-4885; e-mail: Kay.Peterson@usda.gov.

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."

The regulations in § 340.6(a) provide that any person may submit a petition to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) seeking a determination that an article should not be regulated under 7 CFR part 340. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of § 340.6 describe the form that a petition for determination of nonregulated status must take and the information that must be included in the petition.

On August 4, 1998, APHIS received a petition (APHIS Petition No. 98-216-01p) from Monsanto Company (Monsanto) of St. Louis, MO, (Monsanto) requesting a determination of nonregulated status under 7 CFR part 340 for a canola (*Brassica napus* L.) line designated as RT73, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate. The Monsanto petition states that the subject canola line should not be regulated by APHIS because it does not present a plant pest risk.

As described in the petition, canola line RT73 has been genetically engineered to express a CP4 EPSPS gene derived from *Agrobacterium* sp. strain CP4, and a *gox* gene derived from *Ochrobactrum anthropi* strain LBAA. The CP4 EPSPS gene encodes a 5-enolpyruvylshikimate-3-phosphate synthase (EPSPS) protein, and the *gox* gene encodes a glyphosate oxidoreductase (GOX) protein. The EPSPS and GOX proteins confer tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate. The *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* method was used to transfer the added genes into the parental canola Westar variety plants, and expression of the added genes is controlled in part by gene sequences derived from the plant pathogen figwort mosaic virus.