

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. 00-070-2]

Mycogen c/o Dow and Pioneer; Availability of Environmental Assessment for Determination of Nonregulated Status

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that an environmental assessment has been prepared for a proposed determination that corn line developed by Mycogen Seeds c/o Dow AgroSciences LLC and Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., and designated as line 1507, which has been genetically engineered for insect resistance and tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate, would no longer be considered a regulated article under our regulations governing the introduction of certain genetically engineered organisms. We are making this environmental assessment available to the public for review and comment.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive by May 18, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 00-070-2, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Suite 3C03, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 00-070-2.

You may read the petition for a determination of nonregulated status submitted by Mycogen Seeds c/o Dow AgroSciences LLC and Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., the environmental assessment, and any comments we receive on this notice of availability in our reading room. The reading room 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) 690-2817 before coming.

APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register**, and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Susan Koehler, Biotechnology Assessments Section, PPQ, APHIS, Suite 5B05, 4700 River Road Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-4886. To obtain a copy of the environmental assessment, contact Ms. Kay Peterson at (301) 734-4885; e-mail: kay.peterson@aphis.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On May 15, 2000, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) received a petition (APHIS Petition No. 00-136-01p) from Mycogen Seeds c/o Dow AgroSciences LLC (Mycogen c/o Dow) of Indianapolis, IN, and Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc. (Pioneer) of Johnston, IA, seeking a determination that a corn line designated as *Zea mays* L. cultivar line 1507 (line 1507), which has been genetically engineered for resistance to certain lepidopteran insect species and tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate, does not present a plant pest risk and, therefore, is not a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340.

On September 6, 2000, APHIS published a notice in the **Federal Register** (65 FR 53976-53977, Docket no. 00-070-1) announcing that the Mycogen c/o Dow and Pioneer 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 corn line and food products derived from it. In the notice, APHIS solicited written comments from the public as to whether corn line 1507 posed a plant pest risk. The comments were to have been received by APHIS on or before November 6, 2000. APHIS

received no comments on the subject petition during the designated 60-day comment period.

Corn line 1507 has been genetically engineered to express a Cry1F insecticidal protein derived from the common soil bacterium, *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *aizawai* (*Bt aizawai*). The Cry1F protein is said to be effective in controlling the larvae of such common pests of corn as European corn borer, southwestern corn borer, black cutworm, and fall armyworm. The subject corn line also contains the *pat* gene derived from the bacterium *Streptomyces viridochromogenes*. The *pat* gene encodes the phosphinothricin acetyltransferase (PAT) protein, which confers tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate. Expression of these added genes is controlled in part by gene sequences from the plant pathogens cauliflower mosaic virus and *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*. Microprojectile bombardment was used to transfer the added genes into the recipient inbred corn line Hi-II.

Corn line 1507 has been considered a regulated article under the regulations in 7 CFR part 340 because it contains gene sequences from plant pathogens. Field tests of the subject corn line have been conducted since 1997 under APHIS notifications under confined conditions. If the Mycogen c/o Dow and Pioneer petition for a determination of nonregulated status is approved, corn line 1507 would no longer be considered a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340 and the requirements pertaining to regulated articles under those regulations would no longer apply to the subject corn line or its progeny.

To provide the public with documentation of APHIS' review and analysis of the environmental impacts and plant pest risk associated with a determination of nonregulated status for the Mycogen c/o Dow and Pioneer corn line 1507, an environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared. 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).

Done in Washington, DC, this 12th day of April 2001.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 01-9626 Filed 4-17-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety Inspection Service

[Docket No. 01-013N]

National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) will meet on May 7, 2001. The meeting is open to the public. The Committee will review scientific issues related to the Agency's *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 policy. The committee will also begin discussion of the charge contained in the conference report accompanying Public Law 106-387, which states that NACMCF should undertake to consider issues regarding microbiological performance standards, including the role of such standards in ensuring meat and poultry product safety. FSIS will finalize an agenda describing the specific charges to the Committee on or before the meeting date and post it to its internet web page.

Additionally, on May 8, 9, and 10, 2001, FSIS invites Committee members to attend a technical conference and a public meeting regarding the Agency's recently proposed regulatory requirements for ready-to-eat meat and poultry products, "Performance Standards for the Production of Processed Meat and Poultry Products."

DATES: The full Committee will hold a meeting on Monday, May 7, 2001, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Washington Plaza Hotel, Federal Ballroom, #10 Thomas Circle, NW, at Massachusetts Avenue & 14th Street, Washington, DC 20005, telephone (202) 842-1300. Send an original and two copies of comments to the Food Safety and Inspection Service Docket Room: Docket #01-013N, Room 102 Cotton Annex Building, 300 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20250. Comments may also be sent by facsimile (202) 205-0381. The comments and the official

transcript of the meeting, when it becomes available, will be kept in the FSIS Docket Room at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Persons interested in making a presentation, submitting technical papers, or providing comments should contact Ms. Karen Thomas (202) 690-6620, Fax (202) 690-6634, e-mail address:

karen.thomas@dcqexs1.hqnet.usda.gov, or mailing address: Food Safety and Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, Office of Public Health and Science, Aerospace Center, Room 333, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3700. Persons requiring a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations should notify Ms. Thomas, by April 25, 2001.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The NACMCF was established in April 1988, in response to a recommendation in a 1985 report of the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Food Protection, Subcommittee on Microbiological Criteria, "An Evaluation of the Role of Microbiological Criteria for Foods." The Charter for the NACMCF is available for viewing on the FSIS internet web page at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/programs/nacmcf_chart.htm

The NACMCF provides scientific advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on public health issues relative to the safety and wholesomeness of the U.S. food supply including development of microbiological criteria and review and evaluation of epidemiological and risk assessment data and methodologies for assessing microbiological hazards in foods. The Committee also provides advice to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Departments of Commerce and Defense. Dr. I. Kaye Wachsmuth, Deputy Administrator, Office of Public Health and Science, FSIS, is the Committee Chair.

At the May 7, 2001, meeting announced in this document, the Committee will review scientific issues related to the Agency's policy with respect to the following issues:

- Research on *E. coli* O157:H7 in blade tenderized beef steaks, including a preliminary study by scientists at Kansas State University.
- Technical issues related to scientifically determined criteria, including microbiological performance standards, and how such criteria and standards best function to provide scientific support for approaches to

ensure the safety of meat and poultry products.

Additional Public Notification

Public awareness of all segments of rulemaking and policy development is important. Consequently, in an effort to better ensure that minorities, women, and persons with disabilities are aware of this notice, FSIS will announce it and provide copies of this **Federal Register** publication in the FSIS Constituent Update. FSIS provides a weekly FSIS Constituent Update, which is communicated via fax to over 300 organizations and individuals. In addition, the update is available on-line through the FSIS web page located at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>. The update is used to provide information regarding FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, **Federal Register** notices, FSIS public meetings, recalls, and any other types of information that could affect or would be of interest to our constituents/stakeholders. The constituent fax list consists of industry, trade, and farm groups, consumer interest groups, allied health professionals, scientific professionals, and other individuals that have requested to be included. Through these various channels, FSIS is able to provide information to a much broader, more diverse audience. For more information and to be added to the constituent fax list, fax your request to the Congressional and Public Affairs Office, at (202) 720-5704.

Done at Washington, DC on: April 12, 2001.

Thomas J. Billy,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 01-9622 Filed 4-17-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-DM-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area (SRA) Advisory Council

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: An Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area Advisory Council meeting will convene in Salem, Oregon on Saturday, May 5, 2001. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m., and will conclude at approximately 2 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Salem City Library, Anderson Room B, located at 585 Liberty Street SE in Salem, Oregon.

The Opal Creek Wilderness and Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area Act of 1996 (Opal Creek Act) (Public Law 104-208) directed the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area Advisory