

www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information regarding the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey, contact Ms. Coanne O'Hern, Operations Officer, Program Support Staff, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 134, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-8717. For copies of more detailed information on the information collection, contact Ms. Cheryl Groves, APHIS' Information Collection Coordinator, at (301) 734-5086.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey.

OMB Number: 0579-0010.

Expiration Date of Approval: August 31, 2000.

Type of Request: Extension of approval of an information collection.

Abstract: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for preventing foreign plant pests from entering the United States, preventing the spread of pests not widely distributed within the United States, and eradicating those pests when eradication is feasible. The Plant Quarantine Act and the Federal Plant Pest Act authorize the Department to carry out this mission.

The Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) division of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is responsible for implementing the regulations that carry out the intent of these Acts.

To this end, PPQ has joined forces with the States to create a program called the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey.

This program allows the States and PPQ to conduct surveys to detect and measure the presence of foreign plant pests of concern and to enter survey data into a national computer-based system called the National Agricultural Plant Information System. This, in turn, allows us to obtain a more comprehensive picture of plant pest conditions in the United States.

The information generated by this program is used by the States to predict potential plant pest situations. It is used by Federal interests to promptly detect and respond to the occurrence of new pests and to record the location of those pest incursions that could directly hinder the export of U.S. farm commodities.

Plant pests such as insects or certain bacteria have the potential to cause billions of dollars in damage to U.S. agriculture if they become established within the United States.

Our Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey entails the use of several information collection activities, including a Cooperative Agreement, Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey procedures, and a Specimens for Determination Form (PPQ Form 391).

We are asking the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve, for an additional 3 years, our use of this information collection activity in connection with our survey work.

The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public (as well as affected agencies) concerning this information collection activity. These comments will help us:

(1) Evaluate whether the information collection is necessary for the proper performance of our Agency's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(2) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the burden of the information collection, 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: The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .04122 hours per response.

Respondents: State cooperators participating in our Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 50.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 701.

Estimated annual number of responses: 35,050.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 1,445 hours. (Due to rounding, the total annual burden hours may not equal the product of the annual number of responses multiplied by the average reporting burden per response.)

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 15th day of June 2000.

Craig A. Reed,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 00-15623 Filed 6-20-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 00-026-1]

Monsanto Co.; Availability of Environmental Assessment for Extension of Determination of Nonregulated Status for Corn Genetically Engineered for Glyphosate Herbicide Tolerance

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 decision to extend to one additional corn line our determination that a corn line developed by Monsanto Company, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate, is no longer 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 July 21, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Please send your comment and three copies to: Docket No. 00-026-1, 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. 00-026-1.

You may read the extension request and the environmental assessment 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. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. John Turner, Biotechnology Assessments Section, Permits and Risk Assessments, PPQ, APHIS, Suite 5B05, 4700 River Road Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-8365. To obtain a copy of the extension request or the environmental assessment, 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. Further, the regulations in § 340.6(e)(2) provide that a person may request that APHIS extend a determination of nonregulated status to other organisms. Such a request must include information to establish the similarity of the antecedent organism and the regulated article in question.

Background

On January 11, 2000, APHIS received a request for an extension of a determination of nonregulated status (APHIS No. 00-11-01p) from Monsanto Company (Monsanto) of St. Louis, MO, for a corn line designated as Roundup Ready® corn line NK603 (NK603), which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate. The Monsanto request seeks an extension of a determination of nonregulated status issued for Roundup Ready® corn line GA21 (GA21) in response to APHIS petition number 97-099-01p (62 FR 64350-64351, December 5, 1997, Docket No. 97-052-2). Based on the similarity of NK603 to GA21, the antecedent organism, Monsanto requests a determination that glyphosate-tolerant corn line NK603 does not present a plant pest risk and, therefore, is not a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340.

Analysis

Like the antecedent organism, corn line NK603 has been genetically engineered to contain an enzyme, 5-enolpyruvylshikimate-3-phosphate synthase (EPSPS), that imparts tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate. However, corn was the source of the EPSPS enzyme in the antecedent organism, while the EPSPS enzyme in NK603 was derived from *Agrobacterium* sp. strain CP4. The subject corn line and the antecedent organism were developed through use of the particle acceleration method, and expression of the added genes in NK603 and the antecedent organism is controlled in part by gene

sequences derived from the plant pathogen *A. tumefaciens*.

Corn line NK603 and the antecedent organism were genetically engineered using the same transformation method and contain a functionally equivalent enzyme that makes the plants tolerant to the herbicide glyphosate. Accordingly, we have determined that corn line NK603 is similar to the antecedent organism in APHIS petition number 97-099-01p, and we are proposing that this line should no longer be regulated under the regulations in 7 CFR part 340.

The subject corn line has been considered a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340 because it contains gene sequences derived from plant pathogens. However, evaluation of field data reports from field tests of NK603 conducted under APHIS notifications since 1997 indicates that there were no deleterious effects on plants, nontarget organisms, or the environment as a result of its environmental release.

Should APHIS approve Monsanto's request for an extension of a determination of nonregulated status, corn line NK603 would no longer be considered a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340. Therefore, the requirements pertaining to regulated articles under those regulations would no longer apply to the field testing, importation, or interstate movement of the subject corn line or its progeny.

National Environmental Policy Act

An environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared to examine any potential environmental impacts associated with this proposed extension of a determination of nonregulated status. 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). Copies of Monsanto's extension request and the EA are available upon request from the individual listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Done in Washington, DC, this 15th day of June 2000.

Craig A. Reed,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 00-15622 Filed 6-20-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Foreign Agricultural Service

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with Paperwork Reduction Act, this notice announces the Foreign Agricultural Service's intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of the regulations governing the entry of raw-cane sugar under the tariff rate quota (TRQ) into the United States.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by August 21, 2000 to be assured of consideration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS:

Mail or deliver comments to James D. Grueff, Assistant Deputy Administrator, International Trade Policy and Acting Division Director, Import Policies and Programs Division, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 1021, Washington, DC 20250-1021. For further information, contact Mr. Grueff at telephone number (202) 720-4055.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Certificate of Quota Eligibility
OMB NUMBER: 0551-0014.

Expiration date of approval:
November 30, 2000.

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

Abstract: The Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the quantity of raw-cane sugar which may be entered at the in-quota duty rates of the TRQ. The terms under which Certificates of Quota Eligibility will be issued to foreign countries that have been allocated a share of the TRQ are set forth in 15 CFR part 2011, Subpart A, Allocation of Tariff-rate Quota on Imported Sugars, Syrups, and Molasses. The authority for Certificates of Quota Eligibility is additional U.S. note 5(b)(iv) to chapter 17 of the HTS.

The regulation, promulgated by the U.S. Trade Representative, provides for the issuance of Certificates of Quota Eligibility by the Secretary of Agriculture, and in general prohibits sugar subject to the TRQ from being imported into the United States or withdrawn from a warehouse for consumption at the in-quota rates unless