

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 63, No. 27

Tuesday, February 10, 1998

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.

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

Sunshine Act Meeting

Board of Directors Meeting

TIME: 9:00 a.m.–12:00 noon.

PLACE: ADF Headquarters.

DATE: Wednesday, February 11, 1998

STATUS: Open.

Agenda

Wednesday, February 11, 1998.

9:00 a.m. Chairman's Report

10:00 a.m. President's Report

12:00 noon Adjournment

If you have any questions or comments, please direct them to Ms. Janis McCollim, Executive Assistant to the President, who can be reached at (202) 673-3916.

William R. Ford,*President.*

[FR Doc. 98-3425 Filed 2-6-98; 11:50 am]

BILLING CODE 6116-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Research, Education, and Economics; Notice of Strategic Planning Task Force Meeting

AGENCY: Research, Education, and Economics, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The United States Department of Agriculture announces a meeting of the Strategic Planning Task Force on Research Facilities.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Strategic Planning Task Force on Research Facilities, currently consisting of 14 members, is scheduled to meet for the fourth of eight planned meetings. The meeting is scheduled to be held at the Baton Rouge Hilton, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, beginning at 2:00 p.m. on February 22 and concluding at 3:00 p.m. on February 24. The meeting will be a

review of the Task Force progress in data collection and will devote 1 day to a discussion regarding the proposed instrument to evaluate intramural facilities.

Times and Dates: February 22, 1998, at 2:00 p.m.; February 23, 1998, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; and February 24, 1998, 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Place: Baton Rouge Hilton, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Type of Meeting: Open to the public.

Comments: The public may file written comments before or after the meeting with the contact person listed below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mitch Geasler, Project Director, Strategic Planning Task Force on Research Facilities, Room 344-A, Jamie L. Whitten Building, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C. 20250-0113. Telephone 202-720-3803.

Done at Washington, D.C., on this 3rd Day of February 1998.

I. Miley Gonzalez,*Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics.*

[FR Doc. 98-3273 Filed 2-9-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 97-091-2]

AgrEvo USA Co.; Availability of Determination of Nonregulated Status for Canola Genetically Engineered for Glufosinate Herbicide Tolerance

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public of our determination that AgrEvo USA Company's canola designated as Transformation Event T45, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate, is no longer considered a regulated article under our regulations governing the introduction of certain genetically engineered organisms. Our determination is based on our evaluation of data submitted by AgrEvo USA Company in its petition for a determination of nonregulated status

and an analysis of other scientific data. This notice also announces the availability of our written determination document and its associated environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 29, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The determination, an environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact, and the petition 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 those documents are asked to call in advance of visiting at (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the reading room.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. James Lackey, Biotechnology Evaluation, BSS, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-6748. To obtain a copy of the determination or the environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact, contact Ms. Kay Peterson at (301) 734-4885; e-mail: mkpeterson@aphis.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On July 24, 1997, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) received a petition (APHIS Petition No. 97-205-01p) from AgrEvo USA Company (AgrEvo) of Wilmington, DE, seeking a determination that canola (*Brassica napus* L.) designated as Transformation Event T45 (event T45), which has been genetically engineered for 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 30, 1997, APHIS published a notice in the **Federal Register** (62 FR 51081-51082, Docket No. 97-091-1) 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 and food products derived from it. In the notice, APHIS solicited written comments from the public as to whether this canola posed a plant pest risk. The comments were to have been received by APHIS on

or before December 1, 1997. APHIS received no comments on the subject petition during the designated 60-day comment period.

Analysis

Event T45 canola has been genetically engineered to contain a *pat* gene derived from *Streptomyces viridochromogenes*. The *pat* gene encodes the enzyme phosphinothricin-N-acetyltransferase (PAT), which confers tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate. Expression of the *pat* gene is controlled by a 35S promoter and terminator derived from the plant pathogen cauliflower mosaic virus. The *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* method was used to transfer the added genes into the parental cultivar *B. napus* var. AC EXCEL.

The subject canola 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 this canola conducted under APHIS permits since 1996 indicates that there were no deleterious effects on plants, nontarget organisms, or the environment as a result of the environmental release of event T45 canola.

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 event T45 canola: (1) Exhibits no plant pathogenic properties; (2) is no more likely to become a weed than canola developed by traditional breeding techniques; (3) is unlikely to increase the weediness potential for any other cultivated or wild species with which it can interbreed; (4) will not cause damage to raw or processed agricultural commodities; and (5) will not harm threatened or endangered species or other organisms, such as bees, that are beneficial to agriculture. Therefore, APHIS has concluded that the subject canola and any progeny derived from hybrid crosses with other nontransformed canola varieties will be as safe to grow as canola in traditional breeding programs that are not subject to regulation under 7 CFR part 340.

The effect of this determination is that AgrEvo's event T45 canola is no longer considered a regulated article 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 of its progeny. However, importation of the subject canola 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 event T45 canola and lines developed from it 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 4th day of January 1998.

Terry L. Medley,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 98–3312 Filed 2–9–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98–008–1]

Public Meeting; Animal Care

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Advance notice of public meeting and request for agenda topics.

SUMMARY: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service plans to hold a public meeting to discuss the animal welfare program and initiatives. This notice solicits suggestions for the agenda for this meeting.

PLACE, DATES, AND TIME OF MEETING: The public meeting will be held at the USDA Conference Center, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737, on Tuesday, May 12, 1998. Registration will take place from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and end at approximately 5 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information on agenda topics

contact Dr. Ron DeHaven, Acting Deputy Administrator, Animal Care, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 84, Riverdale, MD 20737, (301) 734–4981, FAX (301) 734–4328 or 734–4978.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will hold a public meeting in Riverdale, MD, on May 12, 1998, to exchange information with the public about the animal welfare program and initiatives.

The meeting will include a general information session followed by individual workshops on a variety of topics. APHIS is seeking suggestions for meeting topics from the general public, animal researchers, exhibitors, dealers, transporters, and animal protection groups.

Please submit, on or before March 16, 1998, suggestions regarding animal welfare issues of common concern to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Please note that this is not an opportunity to submit formal comments on proposed rules or other regulatory initiatives, but rather is intended to help determine which animal welfare issues and initiatives should be addressed at the public meeting.

After the agenda is finalized, APHIS will announce the schedule in the **Federal Register**.

Done in Washington, DC, this 4th day of February 1998.

Terry L. Medley,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 98–3313 Filed 2–9–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Committee of Scientists Meetings

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meetings.

SUMMARY: Meetings of the Committee of Scientists are scheduled for February 24–25, 1998 in Atlanta, Georgia and March 3–5, 1998, in Sacramento, California. The purpose of the Atlanta meeting is to discuss planning issues concerning the National Forests in the Southern Region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virgin Islands, and Virginia). The purpose of the Sacramento meeting is to discuss planning issues concerning the Pacific Southwest Region (California, Hawaii, Guam and Trust Territories of