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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**40 CFR Part 180**

[OPP-2004-0035; FRL-7350-8]

Time-Limited Exemption from Requirement of a Tolerance; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).**ACTION:** Final rule.

SUMMARY: This regulation establishes an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance for residues of the *Bacillus thuringiensis* VIP3A insect control protein as expressed in event COT102 and the genetic material necessary for its production on cotton when applied/used as a plant-incorporated protectant. Syngenta Seeds submitted a petition to EPA under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA), as amended by the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 (FQPA), requesting an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance. This regulation eliminates the need to establish a maximum permissible level for residues of *Bacillus thuringiensis* VIP3A insect control protein as expressed in event COT102 and the genetic material necessary for its production.

DATES: This regulation is effective March 31, 2004. Objections and requests for hearings, identified by docket ID number OPP-2004-0035, must be received on or before June 1, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Written objections and hearing requests may be submitted electronically, by mail, or through hand delivery/courier. Follow the detailed instructions as provided in Unit IX. of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Leonard Cole, Biopesticides and Pollution Prevention Division (7511C), Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001; telephone number: (703) 305-5412; e-mail address: cole.leonard@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. General Information***A. Does this Action Apply to Me?*

You may be potentially affected by this action if you are an agricultural producer, food manufacturer, or pesticide manufacturer. Potentially

affected categories and entities may include, but are not limited to:

- Crop production (NAICS 111)
- Animal production (NAICS 112)
- Food manufacturing (NAICS 311)
- Pesticide manufacturing (NAICS 32532)

This listing is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather provides a guide for readers regarding entities likely to be affected by this action. Other types of entities not listed in this unit could also be affected. The North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) codes have been provided to assist you and others in determining whether this action might apply to certain entities. To determine whether you or your business may be affected by this action, you should carefully examine the applicability provisions. If you have any questions regarding the applicability of this action to a particular entity, consult the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.**

B. How Can I Get Copies of this Document and Other Related Information?

1. *Docket.* EPA has established an official public docket for this action under docket identification (ID) number OPP-2004-0035. The official public docket consists of the documents specifically referenced in this action, any public comments received, and other information related to this action. Although a part of the official docket, the public docket does not include Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. The official public docket is the collection of materials that is available for public viewing at the Public Information and Records Integrity Branch (PIRIB), Rm. 119, Crystal Mall #2, 1921 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Arlington, VA. This docket facility is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The docket telephone number is (703) 305-5805.

2. *Electronic access.* You may access this **Federal Register** document electronically through EPA Internet under the “**Federal Register**” listings at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/>. A frequently updated electronic version of 40 CFR part 180 is available on E-CFR Beta Site Two at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr/>.

An electronic version of the public docket is available through EPA's electronic public docket and comment system, EPA Dockets. You may use EPA Dockets at <http://www.epa.gov/edocket/> to submit or view public comments, access the index listing of the contents

of the official public docket, and to access those documents in the public docket that are available electronically. Once in the system, select “search,” then key in the appropriate docket ID number.

II. Background and Statutory Findings

In the **Federal Register** of November 26, 2003 (68 FR 66422) (FRL-7332-8), EPA issued a notice pursuant to section 408 of the FFDCA, 21 U.S.C. 346a(e), as amended by FQPA (Public Law 104-170), announcing the filing of a pesticide tolerance petition (3F6756) by Syngenta Seeds, Incorporated, P.O. Box 12257, 3054 Cornwallis Road, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2257. This notice included a summary of the petition prepared by the petitioner Syngenta Seeds, Incorporated. Comments were received from grower groups, and the National Cotton Council supporting this petition.

The petition requested that 40 CFR 180 be amended by establishing an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance for residues of *Bacillus thuringiensis* VIP3A Insect Control Protein as Expressed in Event COT102 and the genetic material necessary for its production.

III. Risk Assessment

New section 408(c)(2)(A)(i) of the FFDCA allows EPA to establish an exemption from the requirement for a tolerance (the legal limit for a pesticide chemical residue in or on a food) only if EPA determines that the tolerance is “safe.” Section 408(c)(2)(A)(ii) of the FFDCA defines “safe” to mean that “there is a reasonable certainty that no harm will result from aggregate exposure to the pesticide chemical residue, including all anticipated dietary exposures and all other exposures for which there is reliable information.” This includes exposure through drinking water and in residential settings, but does not include occupational exposure. Section 408 of the FFDCA (b)(2)(C) requires EPA to give special consideration to exposure of infants and children to the pesticide chemical residue in establishing a tolerance and to “ensure that there is a reasonable certainty that no harm will result to infants and children from aggregate exposure to the pesticide chemical residue. . . .” Additionally, section 408(b)(2)(D) of the FFDCA requires that the Agency consider “available information” concerning the cumulative effects of a particular pesticide's residues and “other substances that have a common mechanism of toxicity.”

EPA performs a number of analyses to determine the risks from aggregate exposure to pesticide residues. First, EPA determines the toxicity of pesticides. Second, EPA examines exposure to the pesticide through food, drinking water, and through other exposures that occur as a result of pesticide use in residential settings.

IV. Toxicological Profile

Consistent with section 408(b)(2)(D) of the FFDCA, EPA has reviewed the available scientific data and other relevant information in support of this action and considered its validity, completeness, and reliability and the relationship of this information to human risk. EPA has also considered available information concerning the variability of the sensitivities of major identifiable subgroups of consumers, including infants and children.

Data have been submitted demonstrating the lack of mammalian toxicity at high levels of exposure to the pure VIP3A proteins. This is similar to the Agency position regarding toxicity of *Bacillus thuringiensis* products from which this vegetative-insecticidal protein is derived. The requirement for residue data for the derivative protein is consistent with residue data requirements in 40 CFR 158.740(b)(2)(i). For microbial products, further toxicity testing and residue data are triggered by significant acute effects in studies such as the mouse oral toxicity study, to verify the observed effects and clarify the source of these effects (Tiers II and III). The acute oral toxicity data submitted support the prediction that the VIP3A protein would be non-toxic to humans. Male and female mice (11 of each) were dosed with the test material 5,050 milligrams/kilogram/body weight (mg/kg/bwt). Outward clinical signs were observed and body weights recorded throughout the 14-day study. No mortality or clinical signs attributed to the test substance were noted during the study. When proteins are toxic, they are known to act via acute mechanisms and at very low doses (Sjogblad, R.D., J.T. McClintock and R. Engler (1992)). Therefore, since no effects were shown to be caused by the vegetative-insecticidal protein, even at relatively high doses levels, vegetative-insecticidal proteins are not considered toxic. The amino acid sequence of VIP3A is not homologous to that of any known or putative allergens described in public data bases. Since VIP3A is a protein, allergenic sensitivities were considered. Current scientific knowledge suggests that common food allergens tend to be resistant to degradation by heat, acid, and proteases, may be glycosylated and

present at high concentrations in the food.

Data have been submitted that demonstrate that the VIP3A protein appears to be present in multiple commercial formulations of *Bt* microbial insecticides at concentrations estimated to be ca. 0.4, 32 parts per million (ppm). This conclusion is based on the presence of proteins of the appropriate molecular weight and immunoreactivity (by SDS-PAGE and western blot), and quantitation by ELISA. Therefore, it is conceivable that small quantities of VIP3A protein are present in the food supply because VIP3A (or a very similar protein, based on size and immunoreactivity) appears to be present in currently registered insecticide products used on food crops, including fresh market produce. These commercial *Bt* products are all exempt from food and feed tolerances.

V. Aggregate Exposures

In examining aggregate exposure, section 408 of the FFDCA directs EPA to consider available information concerning exposures from the pesticide residue in food and all other non-occupational exposures, including drinking water from ground water or surface water and exposure through pesticide use in gardens, lawns, or buildings (residential and other indoor uses).

A. Dietary Exposure

The Agency has considered available information on the aggregate exposure levels of consumers (and major identifiable subgroups of consumers) to the pesticide chemical residue and to other related substances. These considerations include dietary exposure under the tolerance exemption and all other tolerances or exemptions in effect for the vegetative-insecticidal protein chemical residue, and exposure from non-occupational sources.

1. *Food.* Oral exposure, at very low levels, may occur from ingestion of processed cotton seed by products. However, a lack of mammalian toxicity and the digestibility of the vegetative-insecticidal protein have been demonstrated. The use sites of the VIP3A proteins are all agricultural for control of insects.

2. *Drinking water exposure.* Oral exposure, at very low levels, may occur from drinking water. However, a lack of mammalian toxicity and the digestibility of the vegetative-insecticidal protein have been demonstrated. The use sites for the VIP3A proteins are all agricultural for control of insects.

B. Other Non-Occupational Exposure

1. *Dermal exposure.* Exposure via the skin is not likely since the vegetative-insecticidal protein is contained within plant cells, which essentially eliminates this exposure route or reduces these exposure routes to negligible.

2. *Inhalation exposure.* Exposure via inhalation is not likely since the vegetative-insecticidal protein is contained within plant cells, which essentially eliminates this exposure route or reduces this exposure route to negligible.

VI. Cumulative Effects

Pursuant to FFDCA section 408(b)(2)(D)(v), EPA has considered available information on the cumulative effects of such residues and other substances that have a common mechanism of toxicity. These considerations included the cumulative effects on infants and children of such residues and other substances with a common mechanism of toxicity. Because there is no indication of mammalian toxicity to the VIP3A protein, it is reasonable to conclude that there are no cumulative effects for this vegetative-insecticidal protein.

VII. Determination of Safety for U.S. Population, Infants and Children

FFDCA section 408(b)(2)(C) provides that EPA shall assess the available information about consumption patterns among infants and children, special susceptibility of infants and children to pesticide chemical residues and the cumulative effects on infants and children of the residues and other substances with a common mechanism of toxicity. In addition, FFDCA section 408(B)(2)(C) also provides that EPA shall apply an additional tenfold margin of safety for infants and children in the case of threshold effects to account for prenatal and postnatal toxicity and the completeness of the data base unless EPA determines that a different margin of safety (MOS) will be safe for infants and children. In this instance, based on the available data, the Agency concludes that there is a finding of no toxicity for VIP3A proteins and the genetic material necessary for their production. Thus, there are no threshold effects of concern, and as a result, the provision requiring an additional MOS does not apply. Further, the provisions of consumption patterns, special susceptibility, and cumulative effects do not apply.

VIII. Other Considerations

A. Endocrine Disruptors

The safety data submitted show no adverse effects in mammals, even at very high dose levels, and support the prediction that the VIP3A protein would be non-toxic to humans. Therefore no effects on the immune or endocrine systems are expected.

B. Analytical Method(s)

Validated methods for extraction and direct ELISA analysis of VIP3A in cotton seed have been submitted and found acceptable by the Agency.

C. Codex Maximum Residue Level

No Codex maximum residue levels exist for the vegetative-insecticidal protein *Bacillus thuringiensis* VIP3A protein and genetic material necessary for its production in cotton.

IX. Objections and Hearing Requests

Under section 408(g) of the FFDCA, as amended by the FQPA, any person may file an objection to any aspect of this regulation and may also request a hearing on those objections. EPA procedural regulations which govern the submission of objections and requests for hearings appear in 40 CFR part 178. Although the procedures in those regulations require some modification to reflect the amendments made to the FFDCA by the FQPA, EPA will continue to use those procedures, with appropriate adjustments, until the necessary modifications can be made. The new section 408(g) of the FFDCA provides essentially the same process for persons to "object" to a regulation for an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance issued by EPA under new section 408(d) of the FFDCA, as was provided in the old sections 408 and 409 of the FFDCA. However, the period for filing objections is now 60 days, rather than 30 days.

A. What Do I Need to Do to File an Objection or Request a Hearing?

You must file your objection or request a hearing on this regulation in accordance with the instructions provided in this unit and in 40 CFR part 178. To ensure proper receipt by EPA, you must identify docket ID number OPP-2004-0035 in the subject line on the first page of your submission. All requests must be in writing, and must be mailed or delivered to the Hearing Clerk on or before June 1, 2004.

1. *Filing the request.* Your objection must specify the specific provisions in the regulation that you object to, and the grounds for the objections (40 CFR 178.25). If a hearing is requested, the

objections must include a statement of the factual issues(s) on which a hearing is requested, the requestor's contentions on such issues, and a summary of any evidence relied upon by the objector (40 CFR 178.27). Information submitted in connection with an objection or hearing request may be claimed confidential by marking any part or all of that information as CBI. Information so marked will not be disclosed except in accordance with procedures set forth in 40 CFR part 2. A copy of the information that does not contain CBI must be submitted for inclusion in the public record. Information not marked confidential may be disclosed publicly by EPA without prior notice.

Mail your written request to: Office of the Hearing Clerk (1900C), Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001. You may also deliver your request to the Office of the Hearing Clerk in Rm. 104, Crystal Mall #2, 1921 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Arlington, VA. The Office of the Hearing Clerk is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The telephone number for the Office of the Hearing Clerk is (703) 603-0061.

2. *Tolerance fee payment.* If you file an objection or request a hearing, you must also pay the fee prescribed by 40 CFR 180.33(i) or request a waiver of that fee pursuant to 40 CFR 180.33(m). You must mail the fee to: EPA Headquarters Accounting Operations Branch, Office of Pesticide Programs, P.O. Box 360277M, Pittsburgh, PA 15251. Please identify the fee submission by labeling it "Tolerance Petition Fees."

EPA is authorized to waive any fee requirement "when in the judgement of the Administrator such a waiver or refund is equitable and not contrary to the purpose of this subsection." For additional information regarding the waiver of these fees, you may contact James Tompkins by phone at (703) 305-5697, by e-mail at tompkins.jim@epa.gov, or by mailing a request for information to Mr. Tompkins at Registration Division (7505C), Office of Pesticide Programs, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001.

If you would like to request a waiver of the tolerance objection fees, you must mail your request for such a waiver to: James Hollins, Information Resources and Services Division (7502C), Office of Pesticide Programs, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001.

3. *Copies for the Docket.* In addition to filing an objection or hearing request

with the Hearing Clerk as described in Unit IX.A., you should also send a copy of your request to the PIRIB for its inclusion in the official record that is described in Unit I.B.1. Mail your copies, identified by docket ID number OPP-2004-0035, to: Public Information and Records Integrity Branch, Information Resources and Services Division (7502C), Office of Pesticide Programs, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001. In person or by courier, bring a copy to the location of the PIRIB described in Unit I.B.1. You may also send an electronic copy of your request via e-mail to: opp-docket@epa.gov. Please use an ASCII file format and avoid the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Copies of electronic objections and hearing requests will also be accepted on disks in WordPerfect 6.1/8.0 or ASCII file format. Do not include any CBI in your electronic copy. You may also submit an electronic copy of your request at many Federal Depository Libraries.

B. When Will the Agency Grant a Request for a Hearing?

A request for a hearing will be granted if the Administrator determines that the material submitted shows the following: There is a genuine and substantial issue of fact; there is a reasonable possibility that available evidence identified by the requestor would, if established resolve one or more of such issues in favor of the requestor, taking into account uncontested claims or facts to the contrary; and resolution of the factual issues(s) in the manner sought by the requestor would be adequate to justify the action requested (40 CFR 178.32).

X. Statutory and Executive Order Reviews

This final rule establishes a time-limited exemption from the tolerance requirement under section 408(d) of the FFDCA in response to a petition submitted to the Agency. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has exempted these types of actions from review under Executive Order 12866, entitled *Regulatory Planning and Review* (58 FR 51735, October 4, 1993). Because this rule has been exempted from review under Executive Order 12866 due to its lack of significance, this rule is not subject to Executive Order 13211, *Actions Concerning Regulations That Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use* (66 FR 28355, May 22, 2001). This final rule does not contain any information collections subject to OMB approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act

(PRA), 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*, or impose any enforceable duty or contain any unfunded mandate as described under Title II of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA) (Public Law 104–4). Nor does it require any special considerations under Executive Order 12898, entitled *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (59 FR 7629, February 16, 1994); or OMB review or any Agency action under Executive Order 13045, entitled *Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks* (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997). This action does not involve any technical standards that would require Agency consideration of voluntary consensus standards pursuant to section 12(d) of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 (NTTAA), Public Law 104–113, section 12(d) (15 U.S.C. 272 note). Since tolerances and exemptions that are established on the basis of a petition under section 408(d) of the FFDCA, such as the exemption in this final rule, do not require the issuance of a proposed rule, the requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) do not apply. In addition, the Agency has determined that this action will not have a substantial direct effect on States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government, as specified in Executive Order 13132, entitled *Federalism* (64 FR 43255, August 10, 1999). Executive Order 13132 requires EPA to develop an accountable process to ensure “meaningful and timely input by State and local officials in the development of regulatory policies that have federalism implications.” “Policies that have federalism implications” is defined in the Executive Order to include regulations that have “substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.” This final rule directly regulates growers, food processors, food handlers and food retailers, not States. This action does not alter the relationships or distribution of power and responsibilities established by Congress in the preemption provisions of section 408(n)(4) of the FFDCA. For these same reasons, the Agency has determined that this rule does not have any “tribal implications” as described in Executive Order 13175,

entitled *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments* (65 FR 67249, November 6, 2000). Executive Order 13175, requires EPA to develop an accountable process to ensure “meaningful and timely input by tribal officials in the development of regulatory policies that have tribal implications.” “Policies that have tribal implications” is defined in the Executive Order to include regulations that have “substantial direct effects on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and the Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes.” This rule will not have substantial direct effects on tribal governments, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, as specified in Executive Order 13175. Thus, Executive Order 13175 does not apply to this rule. This time-limited exemption from the requirement of a tolerance expires May 1, 2005.

XI. Congressional Review Act

The Congressional Review Act, 5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*, as added by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, generally provides that before a rule may take effect, the agency promulgating the rule must submit a rule report, which includes a copy of the rule, to each House of the Congress and to the Comptroller General of the United States. EPA will submit a report containing this rule and other required information to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General of the United States prior to publication of this final rule in the **Federal Register**. This final rule is not a “major rule” as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 180

Environmental protection, Administrative practice and procedure, Agricultural commodities, Pesticides and pests, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: March 18, 2004.

James Jones,

Director, Office of Pesticide Programs.

■ Therefore, 40 CFR chapter I is amended as follows:

PART 180—[AMENDED]

■ 1. The authority citation for part 180 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 21 U.S.C. 321(q), 346a and 371.

■ 2. Section 180.1247 is added to subpart D to read as follows:

§ 180.1247 *Bacillus thuringiensis* VIP3A protein and the genetic material necessary for its production in cotton is exempt from the requirement of a tolerance.

Bacillus thuringiensis VIP3A protein and the genetic material necessary for its production in cotton is exempt from the requirement of a tolerance when used as a vegetative-insecticidal protein in the food and feed commodities, cotton seed, cotton oil, cotton meal, cotton hay, cotton hulls, cotton forage, and cotton gin byproducts. Genetic material necessary for its production means the genetic material which comprise genetic encoding the VIP3A protein and its regulatory regions. Regulatory regions are the genetic material, such as promoters, terminators, and enhancers, that control expression of the genetic material encoding the VIP3A protein. This time-limited exemption from the requirement of a tolerance expires May 1, 2005.

[FR Doc. 04–6931 Filed 3–30–04; 8:45 am]

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 180

[OPP–2003–0415; FRL–7350–5]

Bacillus Thuringiensis Cry3Bb1; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This regulation establishes an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance for residues of the *Bacillus thuringiensis* Cry3Bb1 protein and the genetic material necessary for its production in corn on field corn, sweet corn, and popcorn when applied/used as a plant-incorporated protectant. Monsanto Company, 800 North Lindberg Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri 63167 submitted a petition to EPA under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA), as amended by the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 (FQPA), requesting an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance. This regulation eliminates the need to establish a maximum permissible level for residues of *Bacillus thuringiensis* Cry3Bb1 protein and the genetic material necessary for its production in corn.

DATES: This regulation is effective March 31, 2004. Objections and requests