

www.aphis.usda.gov/brs/aphisdocs/06_28502r_ea.pdf

Other Information: Additional information about APHIS and its programs is available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. John Cordts, Biotechnology Regulatory Services, APHIS, 4700 River Road, Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-5531. To obtain copies of the environmental assessment, contact Ms. Cynthia Eck at (301) 734-0667; e-mail: cynthia.a.eck@aphis.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." A permit must be obtained or a notification acknowledged before a regulated article may be introduced. The regulations set forth the permit application requirements and the notification procedures for the importation, interstate movement, or release in the environment of a regulated article.

On October 2, 2006, APHIS received two Permit applications (06-278-01r and 06-278-02r) followed by a third Permit application (06-285-02r) received on October 12, 2006, from Ventria Bioscience, Sacramento, CA, for confined field plantings of rice (*Oryza sativa*) plants genetically engineered to express gene coding for the proteins lactoferrin, lysozyme, or serum albumin, respectively. The proposed field plantings are to be conducted in Geary County, KS. The subject plants have been genetically engineered, using techniques of micro-projectile bombardment or disarmed *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation, to express proteins for human lactoferrin, lysozyme, or serum albumin. Expression of the genes is controlled by the rice glutelin 1 promoter (GT1), the rice glutelin 1 signal peptide (gt1), and the nopaline synthase (NOS) terminator sequence from *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*. The genes are expressed only in the endosperm. In addition, the plants may contain either or both of the coding sequences for the genes hygromycin

phosphotransferase (*hpt*) or phosphinothricin acetyltransferase (*pat*), which are marker genes that allow for the selection of transgenic tissues in the laboratory using the antibiotic hygromycin and/or the herbicide bialaphos. Neither selectable marker gene is expressed in mature rice tissues, nor do they have any inherent plant pest characteristics or enhance gene transfer from plants to other organisms. The genetically engineered rice plants are considered regulated articles under the regulations in 7 CFR part 340 because they contain gene sequences from plant pathogens.

The purpose of the field plantings are for pure seed production and for the extraction of lactoferrin, lysozyme, and serum albumin for a variety of research and commercial products. There is currently no commercial rice production in Geary County or in any other location in the state of Kansas. The planting will be conducted using physical confinement measures. In addition, the protocols and field plot design, as well as the procedures for termination of the field plantings, are designed to ensure that none of the subject rice plants persist in the environment after the crop is harvested.

To provide the public with documentation of APHIS' review and analysis of any potential environmental impacts and plant pest risks associated with the proposed release of these transgenic rice plants, 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). Copies of the EA are available from the individual listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 7701-7772 and 7781-7786; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

Done in Washington, DC, this 22nd day of February 2007.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. E7-3484 Filed 2-27-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2007-0026]

Public Meetings; National Animal Identification System Animal Identification Number Device Distribution Databases

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: This is a notice to inform interested stakeholders of upcoming public meetings to discuss the implementation of private/State animal identification number device distribution databases for the animal identification component of the National Animal Identification System, which is a voluntary program. The meetings are being organized by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

DATES: Two meetings will be held, the first on Monday, March 5, 2007, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Tuesday, March 6, 2007, from 8 a.m. to noon, and the second on Monday, March 12, 2007, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Tuesday, March 13, 2007, from 8 a.m. to noon.

ADDRESSES: The public meetings will be held in the Hilton Kansas City Airport, 8801 NW. 112th Street, Kansas City, MO.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Neil Hammerschmidt, Coordinator, National Animal Identification System, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 200, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 734-5571.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As part of ongoing efforts to safeguard animal health, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) initiated implementation of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) in 2004. The NAIS is a cooperative State-Federal-industry program coordinated by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

The first two components of the program, premises registration and animal identification, are well underway. The third component, animal tracing, is currently under development by APHIS and its State and industry partners. Industry, through private systems, and States will manage the animal tracking databases (ATDs) that maintain the movement records of animals. These information systems will provide the locations of a subject animal and the records of other animals that the subject animal came into contact with at

each premises. Currently, we have cooperative agreements with 14 organizations that are participating by managing interim ATDs.

The NAIS is a voluntary program, and protecting individuals' private information and confidential business information is important to APHIS and to all participants and potential participants in the system. APHIS maintains only limited premises registration information and will not have direct access to animal identification or movement records. Animal health officials will request access to animal movement and location records only in the case of an animal disease event.

In keeping with this policy, the records of animal identification number (AIN) devices distributed to a premises when used for voluntary participation in the NAIS will be held by private entities and organizations or by States in AIN device distribution databases (AIN DDDs), rather than in APHIS's AIN Management System. This program change is, we believe, an important one that will serve to encourage participation in the voluntary animal identification component of the NAIS.

While AIN tags used for disease and/or regulatory programs such as the National Scrapie Eradication Program will continue to be administered through the AIN Management System, the distribution records of AIN devices to producers that voluntarily participate in the NAIS will not be maintained on that system. APHIS will continue to approve identification devices for official use in the NAIS and establish agreements with the manufacturers for the authorized use of the AIN. Producers will continue to need a premises identification number to obtain AIN tags. The revised system will still maintain the data requirements of the AIN Management System, but the records of AINs distributed to each premises will be held privately or by the States. The AIN DDDs will be integrated with the NAIS in a manner similar to the one used for the integration of private and State ATDs into our Animal Trace Processing System (ATPS).

Authorized Federal and State animal health officials will need access to some of the animal tracking and animal identification information to be held in the privately or State-administered databases in certain situations. APHIS has defined the situations that would trigger the authorization for animal health officials to request information from AIN DDDs through the ATPS as follows:

1. An indication of (suspect, presumptive positive, etc.) or confirmed

positive test for a foreign animal disease;

2. An animal disease emergency as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture and/or State Departments of Agriculture; and

3. The need to conduct a traceback/traceforward to determine the origin of infection for a program disease (brucellosis, tuberculosis, etc.).

The transition to the private and State AIN DDDs is expected to begin in April 2007. Therefore, in order to provide a forum for the discussion of issues related to privately and State-administered AIN DDDs, APHIS is holding two public meetings. Interested private organizations and State agencies that have databases that could integrate with the NAIS as AIN DDDs are encouraged to attend. Other stakeholders, such as producers and AIN tag manufacturers, device managers, and resellers, are also encouraged to participate. APHIS has approved AIN devices from several manufacturers. Producers can request AIN devices directly from these AIN tag manufacturers or from the AIN device managers or resellers who have marketing agreements with the authorized manufacturers. Additional companies and individuals may become engaged in the distribution of AIN devices. Because each of these groups and entities has a role in the distribution of AIN devices, a process that will be affected by this transition to State and private AIN DDDs, these entities too should consider participating in the meetings even if they do not plan on providing AIN DDDs.

The first of the two public meetings is scheduled for Monday, March 5, 2007, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Tuesday, March 6, 2007, from 8 a.m. to noon. The second meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 12, 2007, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Tuesday, March 13, 2007, from 8 a.m. to noon. Information regarding the meetings may be obtained from the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Done in Washington, DC, this 23rd day of February 2007.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. E7-3509 Filed 2-27-07; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Farm Service Agency

Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection; Application for Payment of Amounts Due Persons Who Have Died, Disappeared, or Have Been Declared Incompetent (FSA-325)

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation/Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the intent of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to request the renewal of a currently approved information collection. This information collection is used by CCC and FSA to document or determine whether representatives or survivors of a producer are entitled to receive payments earned by a producer who dies, disappears, or is declared incompetent before receiving payments or other disbursements.

DATE: *Comments on this notice must be received on or before April 30, 2007 to be assured consideration.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mike Sienkiewicz, Agricultural Program Specialist, Production, Emergencies, and Compliance Division, USDA, FSA, STOP 0517, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0517, telephone (202)720-8959; Electronic mail: Mike.sienkiewica@wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Application for Payment of Amounts Due Persons Who Have Died, Disappeared, or Have Been Declared Incompetent.

OMB Control Number: 0560-0026.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2007.

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

Abstract: Persons desiring to claim payment due a person who has died, disappeared, or has been declared incompetent must do so on Form FSA-325, "Application for Payment of Amounts Due Persons Who Have Died, Disappeared, or Have Been Declared Incompetent". This information is used by FSA county office employees to document the relationship of heirs or beneficiaries and determine the order of precedence for disbursing payments to survivors of the person who has died,