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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains regulatory documents having general applicability and legal effect, most of which are keyed to and codified in the Code of Federal Regulations, which is published under 50 titles pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 1510.

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OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

5 CFR Part 890

RIN: 3206-AK95

Federal Employees Health Benefits Program: Discontinuance of Health Plan in an Emergency

AGENCY: Office of Personnel Management.

ACTION: Proposed rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is issuing a proposed rule to amend the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) regulations regarding discontinuance of a health plan to include situations in which a health plan becomes incapacitated, either temporarily or permanently, as the result of a disaster.

DATES: OPM must receive comments on or before May 8, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Anne Easton, Manager Insurance Group, Center for Employee and Family Support Policy, Strategic Human Resources Policy Division, Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20415; or deliver to OPM Room 3425, 1900 E Street, NW., Washington, DC; or FAX to (202) 606-0633.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen Leibach; first dial (1-888) 801-7210; at the prompt, enter (202) 606-1461.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: OPM currently has regulations dealing with the discontinuance of a health plan in whole or part. The regulations apply when a plan goes out of business or withdraws from the FEHB Program. Enrollees in such plans are notified that they need to change plans. The regulations also allow the automatic

transfer of the enrollment of annuitants who do not change plans.

In light of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, OPM is expanding the definition of a health plan to include situations in which a plan becomes incapable of providing services, either on a permanent or temporary basis, because of a disaster. In such a situation enrollees will be allowed to change health plans. However, depending on the nature of the disaster, it may not be possible to locate enrollees to notify them of the need to change health plans. To ensure there is no loss of coverage, any enrollee who is not able to make a change in these circumstances will be transferred automatically to the standard option of the nationwide Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan.

Invoking the provisions of these regulations will be at OPM's discretion. OPM will provide whatever notification is feasible, if a disaster necessitates enrollment changes under these provisions.

It should be noted that, although one of the regulatory sections being amended, § 890.301, refers to employees who do not participate in premium conversion, under the premium conversion regulations at § 892.207 these provisions would also apply to employees who do participate in premium conversion.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

I certify that this regulation will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities because the regulation only affects health benefits of Federal employees and retirees.

Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Review

This rule has been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget in accordance with Executive Order 12866.

Lists of Subjects in 5 CFR Part 890

Administrative practice and procedure, Government employees, Health facilities, Health insurance, Health professions, Hostages, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Military personnel, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Retirement.

U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Linda M. Springer,
Director.

■ Accordingly, OPM is amending title 5, Code of Federal Regulations as follows:

PART 890—FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

■ 1. The authority citation for part 890 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 8913; § 890.303 also issued under 50 U.S.C. 403p, 22 U.S.C. 4069c and 4069c-1; subpart L also issued under sec. 599 C of Pub. L. 101-513, 104 Stat. 2064, as amended; § 890.102 also issued under sections 11202(f), 11232(e), and 11246(b) and (c) of Pub. L. 105-33, 111 Stat. 251; and section 721 of Pub. L. 105-261, 112 Stat. 2061 unless otherwise noted.

■ 2. In § 890.301 add new paragraph (i)(4)(iv) to read as follows:

§ 890.301 Opportunities for employees who are not participants in premium conversion to enroll or change enrollment; effective dates.

* * * * *

(i) * * *

(4) * * *

(iv) If the discontinuance of the plan, whether permanent or temporary, is due to a disaster, an employee must change the enrollment within 60 days of the disaster, as announced by OPM. If an employee does not change the enrollment within the time frame announced by OPM, the employee will be considered to be enrolled in the standard option of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan. The effective date of enrollment changes under this provision will be set by OPM when it makes the announcement allowing such changes.

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■ 3. In § 890.306 add new paragraph (1)(4)(v) to read as follows:

§ 890.306 When can annuitants or survivor annuitants change enrollment or reenroll and what are the effective dates?

* * * * *

(1) * * *

(4) * * *

(v) If the discontinuance of the plan, whether permanent or temporary, is due to a disaster, an annuitant must change the enrollment within 60 days of the disaster, as announced by OPM. If an annuitant does not change the enrollment within the time frame announced by OPM, the annuitant will

be considered to be enrolled in the standard option of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan. The effective date of enrollment changes under this provision will be set by OPM when it makes the announcement allowing such changes.

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■ 4. In § 890.806 add new paragraph (j)(4)(iv) to read as follows:

§ 890.806 When can former spouses change enrollment or reenroll and what are the effective dates?

* * * * *

(j) * * *

(4) * * *

(iv) If the discontinuance of the plan, whether permanent or temporary, is due to a disaster, the former spouse must change the enrollment within 60 days of the disaster, as announced by OPM. If the former spouse does not change the enrollment within the time frame announced by OPM, the former spouse will be considered to be enrolled in the standard option of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan. The effective date of enrollment changes under this provision will be set by OPM when it makes the announcement allowing such changes.

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■ 5. In § 890.1108 add new paragraph (h)(4)(iv) to read as follows:

§ 890.1108 Opportunities to change enrollment; effective dates.

* * * * *

(h) * * *

(4) * * *

(iv) If the discontinuance of the plan, whether permanent or temporary, is due to a disaster, the enrollee must change the enrollment within 60 days of the disaster, as announced by OPM. If the enrollee does not change the enrollment within the time frame announced by OPM, the enrollee will be considered to be enrolled in the standard option of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan. The effective date of enrollment changes under this provision will be set by OPM when it makes the announcement allowing such changes.

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[FR Doc. 06–2081 Filed 3–6–06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6325–39–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

7 CFR Part 301

[Docket No. 05–078–2]

Karnal Bunt; Addition and Removal of Regulated Areas in Arizona

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Affirmation of interim rule as final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting as a final rule, without change, an interim rule that amended the Karnal bunt regulations by adding certain areas in Maricopa and Pinal Counties, AZ, to the list of regulated areas and by removing certain areas or fields in Maricopa County, AZ, from the list of regulated areas. Those actions were necessary to prevent the spread of Karnal bunt into noninfected areas of the United States and to relieve restrictions on certain areas that were no longer necessary.

DATES: Effective on March 7, 2006, we are adopting as a final rule the interim rule that became effective on December 7, 2005.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Vedpal Malik, Karnal Bunt Program Manager, Pest Detection and Management Programs, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 134, Riverdale, MD 20737–1236; (301) 734–3769.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

In an interim rule effective December 7, 2005, and published in the **Federal Register** on December 13, 2005 (70 FR 73553–73556, Docket No. 05–078–1), we amended the regulations in “Subpart—Karnal Bunt” (7 CFR 301.89–1 through 301.89–16) by adding certain areas in Maricopa and Pinal Counties, AZ, to the list of regulated areas in § 301.89–3(g), either because they were found during surveys to contain a bunted wheat kernel, or because they are within the 3-mile-wide buffer zone around fields or areas affected with Karnal bunt. In the same interim rule, we also amended the regulations by removing certain areas or fields in Maricopa County, AZ, from the list of regulated areas based on our determination that those fields or areas had met our criteria for release from regulation.

We solicited comments concerning the interim rule for 60 days ending February 13, 2006. We did not receive any comments. Therefore, for the reasons given in the interim rule, we are adopting the interim rule as a final rule.

This final rule also affirms the information contained in the interim rule concerning Executive Order 12866 and the Regulatory Flexibility Act, Executive Orders 12372 and 12988, and the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Further, for this action, the Office of Management and Budget has waived its review under Executive Order 12866.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 301

Agricultural commodities, Plant diseases and pests, Quarantine, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Transportation.

PART 301—DOMESTIC QUARANTINE NOTICES

■ Accordingly, we are adopting as a final rule, without change, the interim rule that amended 7 CFR part 301 and that was published at 70 FR 73553–73556 on December 13, 2005.

Done in Washington, DC, this 28th day of February 2006.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 06–2073 Filed 3–6–06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

7 CFR Part 319

[Docket No. 05–003–3]

Importation of Peppers From Certain Central American Countries

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are amending the regulations governing the importation of fruits and vegetables in order to allow certain types of peppers grown in approved registered production sites in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua to be imported, under certain conditions, into the United States without treatment. The conditions to which the importation of peppers will be subject, including trapping, pre-harvest inspection, and shipping procedures, are designed to prevent the introduction of quarantine pests into the United States. This action will allow for the importation of peppers from those countries in Central America while continuing to provide protection against the introduction of quarantine pests into the United States.