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

(1) Evaluate whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, 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 information collection 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 0.477348 hours per response.

Respondents: Accredited veterinarians, candidates for the Veterinary Accreditation Program, and State animal health officials who review applications for veterinary accreditation and reaccreditation.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 63,000.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 2.095936.

Estimated annual number of responses: 132,044.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 63,031 hours. (Due to averaging, the total annual burden hours may not equal the product of the annual number of responses multiplied by the 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 30th day of December 2002.

Peter Fernandez,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 03–214 Filed 1–3–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 02–116–1]

Oriental Mealybug; Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that an environmental assessment has been prepared by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service relative to the control program of the Oriental mealybug (*Planococcus lilacinus*). The environmental assessment documents our review and analysis of environmental impacts associated with five alternatives for control of Oriental mealybug, as well as a recommendation for the use of biological control agents in the event Oriental mealybug is detected in the United States. We are making this environmental assessment available to the public for review and comment.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before February 5, 2003.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 02–116–1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737–1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 02–116–1. If you use e-mail, address your comment to *regulations@aphis.usda.gov.* Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and ''Docket No. 02–116–1'' on the subject line.

You may read any comments that we receive on the draft environmental assessment in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 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.

APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register**, and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at *http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Dale Meyerdirk, Agriculturalist, National Biological Control Institute, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 135, Riverdale, MD 20737–1236; (301) 734–5220.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Oriental mealybug (*Planococcus lilacinus*) is a foreign plant pest that attacks at least 96 different species of plants, including agricultural and ornamental plants. Oriental mealybug is widely distributed in the Eastern Hemisphere. In the Western Hemisphere, Oriental mealybug is found in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guam, and Haiti. Susceptible areas include coastal locations in Mexico as well as the area abutting the Rio Grande Valley. In the United States, an area including all of the south, and extending north and west as far as Pennsylvania; lower Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri; and eastern Texas, is susceptible. Even in cold regions, certain greenhouse crops would be at risk of infestation. For these reasons, Oriental mealybug could become a serious agricultural threat if it were to enter and become established in the United States.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has completed an environmental assessment that considers various methods of suppression for Oriental mealybug in the event this pest is detected in the United States. Based on our findings, we believe that the most effective alternative available is the use of biological control agents in the form of encrytid wasps of the genera *Aenasius, Anagyrus, Aphycus, Gyranusoidea, Leptomastix, Pseudaphyscus, Taftia, Tetracnemoidea,* and *Promuscidae* in the family Aphelinidae. Therefore, we propose to import these biological control agents and rear them on Oriental mealybug in U.S. Department of Agriculture-certified insect quarantine facilities in preparation for their dissemination into the ecosystem in the event of an infestation of Oriental mealybug.

It is expected that the biological control agents would be introduced into areas where the Oriental mealybug occurs and reproduce naturally without further human intervention, and that these stingless, parasitic wasps would become established throughout the

eventual geographical distribution of Oriental mealybug in the United States. The biological characteristics of the organisms under consideration preclude any possibility of harmful effects on human health.

APHIS' review and analysis of the potential environmental impacts associated with each of the possible alternatives are documented in detail in an environmental assessment entitled ''Control of Oriental Mealybug, *Planococcus lilacinus* (Homoptera: Pseudococcidae)'' (October 2002). We are making this environmental assessment available to the public for review and comment. We will consider all comments that we receive on or before the date listed under the heading **DATES** at the beginning of this notice.

You may request copies of the environmental assessment by calling or writing to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.** Please refer to the title of the environmental assessment when requesting copies. The environmental assessment is also available for review in our reading room (information on the location and hours of the reading room is listed under the heading **ADDRESSES** at the beginning of this notice).

The environmental assessment has been 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 1), and (4) APHIS'' NEPA Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372).

Done in Washington, DC, this 30th day of December 2002.

Peter Fernandez,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 03–213 Filed 1–3–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 02–014N]

Residue Testing Procedures; Response to Comments

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is issuing this notice to address comments that it received on its August 6, 2001 **Federal Register** notice, ''Residue Testing Procedures.'' That notice announced that FSIS was changing the action that it would take when livestock or poultry that are presented for slaughter come from producers and others who have previously marketed such animals that contain violative levels of chemical residues. FSIS will now post on its website, the names and addresses of the sellers of livestock and poultry who the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has determined are responsible for the repeated sale of livestock or poultry that contain violative levels of chemical residues. FSIS instituted this action partly in response to a petition submitted by a number of trade associations. The repeat violators alert list (RVAL) may be found at *http://www.fsis.usda.gov.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Carole Thomas, Technical Analysis Staff, Office of Policy, Program Development, and Evaluation, FSIS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 405, Cotton Annex, Washington, DC 20250–3700, (202) 205–0210.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

FSIS conducts both ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection of all livestock and poultry presented for slaughter at each official establishment. As part of ante-mortem inspection, FSIS personnel inspect animals to determine whether they exhibit behaviors or conditions that are indicative of illegal chemical use. If such behaviors or symptoms are exhibited the animals are tagged ''U.S. Suspect'' and are further examined at post-mortem inspection.

During post-mortem inspection, FSIS veterinarians examine carcasses and their organs to determine whether the animals they came from had pathological diseases or other conditions that could have warranted the use of drugs or other chemicals and whether there are any indications of illegal chemical use. In addition, FSIS conducts laboratory analysis of sample organ tissues that have been taken from carcasses that have pathologies or other conditions indicative of chemical use to determine whether they contain violative chemical residues.

On August 6, 2001, FSIS issued a **Federal Register** notice entitled, ''Residue Testing Procedures'' (66 FR 40965). The notice announced that, in cooperation with FDA, FSIS would make publicly available a list of repeat chemical residue violators by posting the list on the FSIS Homepage (*http://www.fsis.usda.gov*). The Agency stated that the list would contain the names and addresses of the sellers of livestock and poultry that FDA had investigated and determined to be responsible for more than one chemical residue violation in a 12-month period. The names and addresses of violators will remain on the list for a year from the time that the violation is confirmed by FDA. For any subsequent violation, the time period would be extended for a year from the date that the violation is confirmed by FDA.

This new procedure replaces FSIS' previous policy of testing livestock and poultry carcasses derived from animals marketed by producers or sellers who were previously the source of an animal with a violative chemical residue at an official establishment (*i.e.*, FSIS ''5/15'' policy).

FSIS received several comments about the policy change that it made effective on September 5, 2001. FSIS has carefully considered the comments and is now responding to them.

One commenter asked FSIS to evaluate the role that livestock markets play in the marketing chain and to provide the necessary resources to ensure that only the actual violator is identified.

FSIS will work closely with the Food and Drug Administration, Center for Veterinary Medicine, to identify the source of an animal that contains a violative chemical residue. If testing shows that a carcass contains a violative chemical residue, the Slaughter Operations Staff at FSIS' Technical Service Center (TSC) will open a case file and attempt to determine the source of the livestock or poultry. The source is the farmer, hauler, or auction market that sold the animal for slaughter.

The TSC staff will try to obtain from the official establishment the name of the seller (*e.g.*, farmer, hauler, producer or auction house) of the livestock or poultry. If the source of the animal is identified, FSIS will send an ''FSIS Violation Notification Letter'' to the identified entity. The letter will provide the results of the residue tests taken.

Additionally, pursuant to an October 1984, Memorandum of Understanding, FSIS will transmit to FDA information about the violative chemical residue found, including the name of the official establishment where the livestock or poultry was presented for slaughter. Transmission to FDA is through the Residue Violation Information System (RVIS).

FDA uses the information that it receives from RVIS to conduct an investigation to confirm a violation and to determine whether the source of the violative livestock or poultry is a repeat