

Contact Information for Alfalfa Farmers Regarding Roundup Ready Alfalfa

Beginning Aug. 6, 2007, alfalfa growers can call the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) on a new toll-free number to obtain information on Roundup Ready (RR) alfalfa field locations. The toll-free number may be used by conventional or organic alfalfa farmers and prospective alfalfa farmers to inquire about the proximity of their farms to RR alfalfa fields. The toll-free number is (866) 724-6408.

To obtain the RR alfalfa field location information, growers will need to provide either latitude and longitude coordinates or the mailing address of their farm or field. APHIS will use the property location to determine the distance to the nearest five RR alfalfa fields in the immediate and surrounding counties. A list of counties in which RR alfalfa is planted is available on the APHIS Web site. The locations of RR alfalfa fields were provided to APHIS by industry and cannot be verified by the agency. Any new information provided by industry will be posted on the APHIS Web site as soon as possible.

Callers to the toll-free number will hear a short recording before being connected to an agency employee, who will ask for property location, calculate the distance to nearby RR alfalfa fields and then provide that information. Callers will be limited to one property location per phone call. The line will be staffed from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday (excluding holidays).

Delays are expected as requests are researched.

RR alfalfa is genetically engineered to resist the herbicide glyphosate (known commercially as Roundup). In 2003, the Monsanto Company and Forage Genetics International submitted a petition to APHIS requesting nonregulated status for RR alfalfa, and APHIS deregulated the line in June 2005. In compliance with a judgment and order by the United States District Court for the Northern District of California, APHIS must prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in support of its 2005 decision to

deregulate RR alfalfa. The court did not overturn federal conclusions regarding the safety of the crop for food and feed purposes but rather concluded that APHIS had not adequately documented potential environmental impacts. On March 23, 2007, APHIS published a *Federal Register* notice announcing that RR alfalfa is once again a regulated article. A future decision regarding the deregulation of RR alfalfa will be issued only after the completion of an appropriately documented EIS. APHIS has also issued an Administrative Order specifying mandatory production practices that must be implemented by RR alfalfa growers.

Toll-free Number for Alfalfa Farmers to Request Field Locations

(866) 724-6408. The toll-free telephone number is for field location information only.

Additional Information

For more information, please visit:

APHIS Web site

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/alfalfa.shtml>

To view the *Federal Register* notice, please visit:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/brs/fedregister/BRS_20070803a.pdf

Additional Contact Information

For further information, please contact:

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