

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

Intergovernmental Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to renew Federal Advisory Committee.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of the Interior, intends to renew the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC). This renewal is in response to the continued need for the IAC to provide intergovernmental advice on coordinating the implementation of the Record of Decision of April 13, 1994, for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. The IAC also provides advice and recommendations to promote integration and coordination of forest management activities between Federal and non-Federal entities.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the April 13, 1994, Record of Decision can be obtained electronically at <http://www.reo.gov/library/reports/newsandga.pdf>. Paper copies can be obtained from the Office of Strategic Planning, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Geraldine Bower, Planning Specialist, Ecosystem Management Coordination Staff, Forest Service, USDA (202) 205-1022.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.), notice is hereby given that the Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of the Interior, intends to renew the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) to the Regional Interagency Executive Committee (RIEC). The purpose of the RIEC is to facilitate the

coordinated implementation of the Record of Decision (ROD) signed April 13, 1994, for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. The RIEC consists of representatives of the following Federal agencies: Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey Biological Resources Division, Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The purpose of the IAC is to advise the RIEC on coordinating the implementation of the ROD. The IAC will provide advice and recommendations to promote integration and coordination of forest management activities between Federal and non-Federal entities.

The IAC is in the public interest in connection with the duties and responsibilities of the managing agencies for developing an ecosystem management approach that is consistent with statutory authority for land use planning. Ecosystem management at the province level requires improved coordination among governmental entities responsible for land management decisions and the public they serve (provinces are defined in the ROD at E19).

The chair of the IAC will alternate annually between representatives of the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The Executive Director, Regional Ecosystem Office, will serve as the Designated Federal Official under sections 10(e) and (f) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.). Any vacancies on the committee will be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

A meeting notice will be published in the **Federal Register** within 15 to 45 days before a scheduled meeting date. All meetings are generally open to the public and may include a "public forum" that may offer 5-10 minutes for participants to present comments to the advisory committee. Alternates may choose not to be active during this session on the agenda. The chair of the given committee ultimately makes the decision whether to offer time on the agenda for the public to speak to the general body.

Renewal of the IAC does not require amendment of Bureau of Land Management or Forest Service planning documents because it does not affect the standards and guidelines or land allocations. The Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service will provide further notice, as needed, for additional actions or adjustments when implementing interagency coordination, public involvement, and other aspects of the ROD.

Equal opportunity practices will be followed in all appointments to the advisory committee. To ensure that the recommendations of the IAC have taken into account the needs of diverse groups served by the Departments, membership will, to the extent practicable, include individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.

Dated: March 12, 2003.

Clyde Thompson,

Associate Assistant Secretary for Administration.

[FR Doc. 03-6770 Filed 3-20-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 02-092-2]

Aventis CropScience; Availability of Determination of Nonregulated Status for Cotton Genetically Engineered for Glufosinate Herbicide Tolerance

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public of our determination that the Aventis CropScience cotton designated as Transformation Event LLCotton25, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate, is no longer considered a regulated article under our regulations governing the introduction of certain genetically engineered organisms. Our determination is based on our evaluation of data submitted by Aventis CropScience in its petition for a determination of nonregulated status, our analysis of other scientific data, and comments received from the public in response to a previous notice. This

notice also announces the availability of our written determination and our finding of no significant impact.

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 10, 2003.

ADDRESSES: You may read a copy of the determination, an environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact, the petition for a determination of nonregulated status submitted by Aventis CropScience, and all comments received on the petition and the environmental assessment in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141, 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 that someone is available 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.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Susan Koehler, Biotechnology Regulatory Services, APHIS, Suite 5B05, 4700 River Road Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-4886. To obtain a copy of the determination or environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact, contact Ms. Kay Peterson at (301) 734-4885; e-mail: Kay.Peterson@aphis.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On February 12, 2002, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) received a petition (APHIS Petition No. 02-042-01p) from Aventis CropScience (Aventis) of Research Triangle Park, NC, requesting a determination of nonregulated status under 7 CFR part 340 for cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum* L.) designated as Transformation Event LLCotton25 (LLCotton25), which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate. The Aventis petition states that the subject cotton should not be regulated by APHIS because it does not present a plant pest risk.

On December 16, 2002, APHIS published a notice in the **Federal Register** (67 FR 77034-77035, Docket No. 02-092-1) announcing that the Aventis petition and an environmental assessment (EA) were available for public review. This notice also discussed the role of APHIS, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Food and Drug Administration in regulating the subject cotton and food

products developed from it. APHIS received two comments on the petition and the EA during the 60-day comment period which ended February 14, 2002. The comments were received from a cotton industry organization and a cotton farmer, and both supported nonregulated status for LLCotton25.

LLCotton25 has been genetically engineered to contain a *bar* gene isolated from *Streptomyces hygroscopicus* strain ATCC21705. The *bar* gene encodes phosphinothricin-N-acetyltransferase (PAT), and the PAT enzyme catalyzes the conversion of L-phosphinothricin, the active ingredient in glufosinate, to an inactive form, thus conferring tolerance to the herbicide. Expression of the added genes is controlled in part by gene sequences from the plant pathogens cauliflower mosaic virus and *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*. *Agrobacterium*-mediated gene transfer was used to transfer the added genes into the recipient Coker 312 cotton variety.

LLCotton25 has been considered a regulated article under the regulations in 7 CFR part 340 because it contains gene sequences from plant pathogens. This cotton has been field tested since 1999 in the United States under APHIS notifications. In the process of reviewing the notifications for field trials of the subject cotton, APHIS determined that the vectors and other elements were disarmed and that the trials, which were conducted under conditions of reproductive and physical confinement or isolation, would not present a risk of plant pest introduction or dissemination.

Determination

Based on its analysis of the data submitted by Aventis, a review of other scientific data, field tests of the subject cotton, and comments submitted by the public, APHIS has determined that LLCotton25: (1) Exhibits no plant pathogenic properties; (2) is no more likely to become weedy than the non-transgenic parental line or other cultivated cotton; (3) is unlikely to increase the weediness potential for any other cultivated or wild species with which it can interbreed; (4) will not cause damage to raw or processed agricultural commodities; (5) will not harm threatened or endangered species or organisms that are beneficial to agriculture; and (6) should not reduce the ability to control pests and weeds in cotton or other crops. Therefore, APHIS has concluded that the subject cotton and any progeny derived from hybrid crosses with other nontransformed cotton varieties will be as safe to grow as cotton in traditional breeding

programs that is not subject to regulation under 7 CFR part 340.

The effect of this determination is that Aventis' LLCotton25 is no longer considered a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340. Therefore, the requirements pertaining to regulated articles under those regulations no longer apply to the subject cotton or its progeny. However, importation of LLCotton25 and seeds capable of propagation are still subject to the restrictions found in APHIS' foreign quarantine notices in 7 CFR part 319 and imported seed regulations in 7 CFR part 361.

National Environmental Policy Act

An EA was prepared to examine the potential environmental impacts associated with a determination of nonregulated status for Aventis' LLCotton25. 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). Based on that EA, APHIS has reached a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) with regard to its determination that LLCotton25 and lines developed from it are no longer regulated articles under its regulations in 7 CFR part 340. Copies of the EA and FONSI are available from the individual listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Done in Washington, DC, this 18th day of March, 2003.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 03-6798 Filed 3-20-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee, Kamiah, Idaho, USDA, Forest Service.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the authorities in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463) and under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-