

Questions and Answers: Genective SA's Herbicide Tolerant Corn (Event VCO- 01981-5)

APHIS received a petition from Genective SA, in December 2011, seeking a determination of nonregulated status for corn VCO- 01981-5 developed for tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate. Genective SA's GE corn has been produced with the addition of the gene *epsps grg23ace5*.

Q: What is Glyphosate?

A: Glyphosate is a commonly used herbicide used to kill weeds. When applied to glyphosate resistant crops, it helps control weeds without damaging the crop.

Q: What is EPSPS GRG23 ACE5?

A: EPSPS GRG23ACE5 is a specific gene that confers glyphosate tolerance in this corn plant. Similar modified EPSPS genes have a long history of safe use as they have been expressed in GE corn, cotton, soybean, canola, and sugarbeet. Crops containing the modified EPSPS gene are planted widely in the United States.

Q: Has corn VCO- 01981-5 been field tested in the U.S.?

A: Yes, it has been field tested since 2007 in typical corn growing regions of the continental U.S. and Puerto Rico. These tests have occurred under strict requirements at more than 20 locations under USDA APHIS environmental release authorizations.

Q: Why is APHIS making this petition available to the public?

A: This first comment period provides the public an opportunity to review the petition for nonregulated status and provide input that will be considered by APHIS as it develops its ensuing environmental assessment and plant pest risk assessment. APHIS will accept written comments regarding the petition

for a determination of nonregulated status from interested or affected persons for a period of 60 days from the date of the Agency's notice in the *Federal Register*.

Q: What is the next step following the comment period?

A: After the comment period closes, APHIS will carefully consider all written comments received during the comment period and any other relevant information; any substantive issues identified by APHIS based on our review of the petition and our evaluation and analysis of comments will be considered in the development of the Agency's environmental assessment and plant pest risk assessment.

Q: Under APHIS' process, what does the Agency do after it prepares its draft assessments?

A: After the Agency prepares these documents, it makes them publicly available, providing a second 30-day opportunity for public input. The Agency then carefully reviews comments before any determination becomes final.

For more details on the petition process, go to:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/pet_proc_imp_info.shtml

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.