

Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC; New Executive Office Building, 725 17th Street NW., Washington, DC 20503. Commenters are encouraged to submit their comments to OMB via email to: OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov or fax (202) 395-5806 and to Departmental Clearance Office, USDA, OCIO, Mail Stop 7602, Washington, DC 20250-7602.

Comments regarding these information collections are best assured of having their full effect if received by November 27, 2017. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling (202) 720-8681.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number and the agency informs potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information that such persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

National Agricultural Statistics Service

Title: Fast Track Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

OMB Control Number: 0535—New.

Summary of Collection: Executive Order 12862 directs Federal agencies to provide service to the public that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector. Improving National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) programs requires ongoing assessment of service delivery, by which we mean systematic review of the operation of a program, the quality, usability, and ease of accessing our surveys and public information compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the continuous improvement of the program.

Need and Use of the Information: The information collection activity will garner qualitative customer and stakeholder feedback in an efficient, timely manner, in accordance with the Administration's commitment to improving service delivery. By qualitative feedback we mean information that provides useful insights on perceptions and opinions, but are not statistical surveys that yield quantitative results that can be generalized to the population of study. This feedback will provide insights into customer or stakeholder perceptions, experiences and expectations, provide an early warning of issues with service, or focus attention on areas where

communication, training or changes in operations might improve delivery of products or services. These collections will allow for ongoing, collaborative and actionable communications between NASS and its customers and stakeholders. It will allow feedback to contribute directly to the improvement of program management.

Feedback collected under this generic clearance will provide useful information, but it will not yield data that can be generalized to the overall population. This type of generic clearance for qualitative information will not be used for quantitative information collections that are designed to yield reliably actionable results, such as monitoring trends over time or documenting program performance. Such data uses require more rigorous designs that address: The target population to which generalizations will be made, the sampling frame, the sample design (including stratification and clustering), the precision requirements or power calculations that justify the proposed sample size, the expected response rate, methods for assessing potential non-response bias, the protocols for data collection, and any testing procedures that were or will be undertaken prior fielding the study. Depending on the degree of influence the results are likely to have, such collections may still be eligible for submission for other generic mechanisms that are designed to yield quantitative results.

Description of Respondents: Farms; Business or other for-profit; Not-for-profit Institutions and State, Local or Tribal Government.

Number of Respondents: 120,000.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion.

Total Burden Hours: 8,375.

Charlene Parker,

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 2017-23364 Filed 10-26-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2017-0073]

Bayer CropScience LP; Availability of Petition for Determination of Nonregulated Status of Cotton Genetically Engineered for Resistance to Glyphosate and Isoxaflutole

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has received a petition from Bayer CropScience LP seeking a determination of nonregulated status of cotton designated as event GHB811, which has been genetically engineered for dual resistance to the herbicides glyphosate and isoxaflutole. The petition has been submitted in accordance with our regulations concerning the introduction of certain genetically engineered organisms and products. We are making the Bayer CropScience LP petition available for review and comment to help us identify potential environmental and interrelated economic issues and impacts that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service may determine should be considered in our evaluation of the petition.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before December 26, 2017.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#/docketDetail;D=APHIS-2017-0073>.
- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:* Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2017-0073, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Supporting documents and any comments we receive on this docket may be viewed at <http://www.regulations.gov/#/docketDetail;D=APHIS-2017-0073> or in our reading room, which 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) 7997039 before coming.

The petition is also available on the APHIS Web site at: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/petitions_table_pending.shtml under APHIS petition 17-138-01p.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. John Turner, Director, Environmental Risk Analysis Programs, Biotechnology Regulatory Services, APHIS, 4700 River Road, Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 851-3954, email: john.t.turner@aphis.usda.gov. To obtain copies of the petition, contact Ms. Cindy Eck at (301) 851-3892, email: cynthia.a.eck@aphis.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the authority of the plant pest provisions of the Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7701 *et seq.*), the regulations in 7 CFR part 340, “Introduction of Organisms and Products Altered or Produced Through Genetic Engineering Which Are Plant Pests or Which There Is Reason to Believe Are Plant Pests,” regulate, among other things, the introduction (importation, interstate movement, or release into the environment) of organisms and products altered or produced through genetic engineering that are plant pests or that there is reason to believe are plant pests. Such genetically engineered (GE) organisms and products are considered “regulated articles.”

The regulations in § 340.6(a) provide that any person may submit a petition to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) seeking a determination that an article should not be regulated under 7 CFR part 340. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of § 340.6 describe the form that a petition for a determination of nonregulated status must take and the information that must be included in the petition.

APHIS has received a petition (APHIS Petition Number 17–138–01p) from Bayer CropScience LP of Research Triangle Park, NC (Bayer), seeking a determination of nonregulated status of cotton (*Gossypium* spp.) designated as event GHB811, which has been genetically engineered for dual resistance to the herbicides glyphosate and isoxaflutole. The Bayer petition states that information collected during field trials and laboratory analyses indicates that GHB811 cotton is not likely to be a plant pest and therefore should not be a regulated article under APHIS’ regulations in 7 CFR part 340.

As described in the petition, GHB811 cotton was developed through agrobacterium-mediated transformation using the vector pTSIH09 containing hppdPfw336–1Pa and 2mepsps expression cassettes. The regulatory sequences used in this construct are derived from common plants or plant pathogens that are routinely used in plant biotechnology and have a history of safe use. GHB811 cotton is currently regulated under 7 CFR part 340. Interstate movements and field tests of GHB811 cotton have been conducted under notifications acknowledged by APHIS.

Field tests conducted under APHIS oversight allowed for evaluation in a natural agricultural setting while imposing measures to minimize the risk of persistence in the environment after completion of the tests. Data are gathered on multiple parameters and

used by the applicant to evaluate agronomic characteristics and product performance. These and other data are used by APHIS to determine if the new variety poses a plant pest risk.

Paragraph (d) of § 340.6 provides that APHIS will publish a notice in the **Federal Register** providing 60 days for public comment for petitions for a determination of nonregulated status. On March 6, 2012, we published in the **Federal Register** (77 FR 13258–13260, Docket No. APHIS–2011–0129) a notice¹ describing our process for soliciting public comment when considering petitions for determinations of nonregulated status for GE organisms. In that notice we indicated that APHIS would accept written comments regarding a petition once APHIS deemed it complete.

In accordance with § 340.6(d) of the regulations and our process for soliciting public input when considering petitions for determinations of nonregulated status for GE organisms, we are publishing this notice to inform the public that 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 this notice. The petition is available for public review and comment, and copies are available as indicated under **ADDRESSES** and **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** above.

We are interested in receiving comments regarding potential environmental and interrelated economic issues and impacts that APHIS may determine should be considered in our evaluation of the petition. We are particularly interested in receiving comments regarding biological, cultural, or ecological issues, and we encourage the submission of scientific data, studies, or research to support your comments.

After the comment period closes, APHIS will review 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 our decisionmaking documents. As part of our decisionmaking process regarding a GE organism’s regulatory status, APHIS prepares a plant pest risk assessment to assess its plant pest risk and the appropriate environmental documentation—either an

environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS)—in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), to provide the Agency with a review and analysis of any potential environmental impacts associated with the petition request. For petitions for which APHIS prepares an EA, APHIS will follow our published process for soliciting public comment (see footnote 1) and publish a separate notice in the **Federal Register** announcing the availability of APHIS’ EA and plant pest risk assessment.

Should APHIS determine that an EIS is necessary, APHIS will complete the NEPA EIS process in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR part 1500–1508) and APHIS’ NEPA implementing regulations (7 CFR part 372).

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 7701–7772 and 7781–7786; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

Done in Washington, DC, this 23rd day of October 2017.

Michael C. Gregoire,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 2017–23401 Filed 10–26–17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Information Collection Activity; Comment Request

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35, as amended), the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) invites comments on the following information collection for which RUS intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by December 26, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas P. Dickson, Acting Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., STOP 1522, Room 5164, South Building, Washington, DC 20250–1522. Telephone: (202) 690–4492. Fax: (202) 720–8435 or email Thomas.Dickson@wdc.usda.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) regulation (5 CFR part 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub.

¹To view the notice, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#/docketDetail;D=APHIS-2011-0129>.