

Questions and Answers: Monsanto's Hybridization System (Event MON 87427)

APHIS received a petition from Monsanto, in October 2010, seeking a determination of nonregulated status for corn MON 87427. MON 87427 was developed such that tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate is expressed throughout the plant, except for certain male reproductive tissues. As a result, appropriately timed sprays of the herbicide will render the plants male-sterile, thus eliminating the need to de-tassel when producing hybrid seed.

De-tasseling of corn plants is done by removing the pollen-producing flowers, the tassel, from the tops of corn plants and placing them on the ground. It is a form of pollination control and is an expensive and time-consuming process.

Q: What are the intended benefits of corn MON 87427?

A: Intended benefits of the product include increased flexibility in hybrid seed production and economic benefits for hybrid seed producers. Costs associated with labor recruitment and deployments to perform de-tasseling are one of the single largest cost improvement opportunities in hybrid seed production.

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 CP4 EPSPS?

A: CP4 EPSPS is a protein introduced by genetic manipulation that is expressed in glyphosate-tolerant crops, which are developed to allow weed control choices for farmers.

Q: Has corn MON 87427 been field tested in the U.S.?

A: Yes, it has been field tested in the major corn production regions of the United States. All field tests that have occurred in the United States were under field permits and notifications, including strict movement controls, granted by APHIS.

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

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