

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WEBINAR ON
THE REGULATION OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

+ + + + +

WEDNESDAY

MAY 6, 2015

+ + + + +

The Webinar convened in the Oklahoma City Memorial Conference Center, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, Maryland, at 6:00 p.m., Dick George, BRS Communications Branch Chief, presiding.

USDA STAFF PRESENT:

DICK GEORGE, BRS Communications Branch Chief
NEIL HOFFMAN, Science Advisor for the Office of
the Deputy Administrator, BRS

COMMENTERS:

ADAM COSTANZA
KRISTINA HUBBARD
BRIAN LEHMANN
AMALIE LIPSTREU
CLINT NESBITT
GENNA REED

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T-A-B-L-E O-F C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

Opening remarks

Dick George 3
Neil Hoffman 3

Public Comment

Genna Reed 13
Kristina Hubbard 21
Clint Nesbitt 29
Adam Costanza 37
Amalie Lipstreu 43
Brian Lehmann 53

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 6:00 p.m.

3 MR. GEORGE: Good evening and welcome
4 to our public engagement webinar on APHIS
5 Biotechnology Regulations. My name is Dick George
6 and I'm the Communications Branch ~~Tech-Chief~~ at
7 Biotechnology Regulatory Services, or BRS. We're
8 part of APHIS, the Animal and Plant Health
9 Inspection Service, and agency of the U.S.
10 Department of Agriculture.

11 Joining me is Dr. Neil Hoffman, Science
12 Advisor in BRS' Office of the Deputy Administrator.

13 DR. HOFFMAN: Our purpose today is to
14 receive your comments on several subject areas
15 regarding the regulation of biotechnology by
16 APHIS. We value your input and are pleased that
17 you joined us today either to make a public comment
18 or to listen to the comments of others.

19 Background information is available at
20 our Web site at
21 www.aphis.usda.gov/APHISVirtualMeetings/.

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1 In addition to tonight's webinar, two
2 more have been scheduled for May 12th and May 20th.

3 PARTICIPANT: They can't hear.

4 MR. GEORGE: Okay. Well, we're going
5 to wait until everybody can hear. And we may start
6 again. So if you can hear us, we're understanding
7 that some folks are unable to hear us, so we're
8 going to get that straightened out before we
9 continue.

10 AUTOMATED PHONE OPERATOR: All
11 participants are now in interactive talk mode.

12 PARTICIPANT: Can you speak so they
13 can --

14 MR. GEORGE: Sure. Sure.

15 PARTICIPANT: -- so they can hear --
16 (Simultaneous speaking)

17 MR. GEORGE: So, okay. I'm providing
18 a little bit of sound so that we can test whether
19 or not the sound is reaching those of you that are
20 on the call. We apologize for any inconvenience,
21 but we want to get this right before we start so

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1 that everyone can hear, not only us, but hear each
2 other as well. So I'm going to keep talking just
3 so that the sound can be tested and we can make sure
4 that it's getting through to those of you that are
5 on the call.

6 I'll take this opportunity to let you
7 know that in addition to tonight's webinar, there
8 will be another webinar next week on Tuesday the
9 12th, and then another one on the 20th, which is
10 a Wednesday.

11 Okay. Can people hear me now? I'll
12 raise my voice. Is that better? I'm looking for
13 some --

14 PARTICIPANT: Move the microphone
15 closer.

16 MR. GEORGE: Okay. We'll get the
17 microphone closer.

18 Okay. Is that better? I'm hearing
19 some sound.

20 PARTICIPANT: No, they're not hearing
21 you.

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1 MR. GEORGE: Okay. I will thank all of
2 those who are on the phone for their patience as
3 we try to get this worked out.

4 PARTICIPANT: Keep talking so they can
5 test.

6 MR. GEORGE: Okay. And I've been
7 asked to keep talking, so I will. I want to thank
8 everybody for joining us on this first of three
9 webinars that are planned for the month of May. We
10 welcome your comments. In a few minutes once we
11 know that this is working, I'll give the
12 instructions for exactly how we're going to
13 proceed.

14 Some of you have registered for the
15 meeting and those of you who have registered to
16 comment will be the first speak, and we will give
17 you that opportunity --

18 AUTOMATED PHONE OPERATOR: All
19 participants are now in listen-only mode.

20 MR. GEORGE: -- we'll give you that
21 opportunity in the same order in which you

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1 registered.

2 In the meantime, our apologies for the
3 delay and thank you for your patience.

4 This meeting is scheduled to until 9:00
5 p.m. Eastern Time tonight, and we welcome comments
6 of all who care to comment on biotechnology
7 regulations.

8 And I'm looking around now to see if
9 we've licked this. We think perhaps we have, but
10 we'll give it another minute or two.

11 PARTICIPANT: Now they can hear you.

12 MR. GEORGE: People can how hear me.
13 I'm understanding that I can be heard. Is that
14 correct?

15 PARTICIPANT: Yes. Yes, yes, yes.
16 Excellent.

17 MR. GEORGE: Okay. Everybody is
18 reporting to me that we can now be heard, and so
19 we will now -- we'll start again since we were so
20 close to the beginning and because apparently many
21 of you could not hear our introduction. So we

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1 shall start from the top.

2 Good evening and welcome to our public
3 engagement webinar on APHIS Biotechnology
4 Regulations. My name is Dick George. I'm the
5 Communications Branch Chief at Biotechnology
6 Regulatory Services, or BRS. We're part of APHIS,
7 the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, an
8 agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

9 Joining me is Dr. Neil Hoffman, Science
10 Advisor in BRS' Office of the Deputy Administrator.

11 DR. HOFFMAN: Our purpose today is to
12 receive your comments on several subject areas
13 regarding the regulation of biotechnology by
14 APHIS. We value your input and are pleased that you
15 joined us today either to make a public comment or
16 to listen to the comments of others.

17 Background information is available at
18 our Web site at
19 www.aphis.usda.gov/APHISVirtualMeetings/.

20 In addition to tonight's webinar two
21 more have been scheduled for May 12th and May 20th.

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1 If you prefer to make a written comment
2 instead of a spoken one, you can do so by going to
3 www.regulations.gov through June 22nd. Enter
4 APHIS-2015-0036 in the search box and this will
5 take you to the pages where you can make your
6 comment. You can go to regulations.gov any time
7 up until June 22nd to leave a written public
8 comment, or you can make a spoken comment here at
9 our meeting, which will go until 9:00 a.m. Eastern
10 Daylight Time.

11 Whether spoken or written, your comment
12 will become part of the public record. A
13 transcript of your spoken comments will be posted
14 to the website in the next three weeks.

15 Today we're here to listen and to
16 receive your input only, not to answer questions
17 about biotechnology regulations.

18 MR. GEORGE: APHIS is considering
19 amending its current regulations and seeks your
20 input on the following questions: The first
21 question: Should APHIS regulate based on the

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1 characteristics of biotechnology products and the
2 potential risks they may pose or by the process by
3 which they were created? In either case, what
4 criteria should be used to determine what APHIS
5 regulates? Are ~~thereir~~ products and processes
6 APHIS should not regulate?

7 Two: The Plant Protection Act gives
8 APHIS the authority to protect plant health through
9 regulatory programs. APHIS has implemented the
10 Plant Pest Authority as part of their biotechnology
11 regulations. Should APHIS add noxious weed
12 provisions to their biotechnology regulations?
13 And if so, how? What protection goals should APHIS
14 consider?

15 DR. HOFFMAN: Three: Are there legal
16 authorities given to USDA outside the Plant
17 Protection Act that APHIS should examine to
18 regulate or oversee the products of biotechnology?
19 What are they and how would they be used?

20 Four: What non-regulatory solutions
21 or policy alternatives could or should be

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1 considered to complement APHIS' regulatory
2 program?

3 MR. GEORGE: We have asked commenters
4 to pre-register to comment. We will ask those
5 commenters to go first. Each commenter will have
6 up to seven minutes to speak with a prompt at five
7 minutes that there are two minutes remaining.
8 After all that have signed up to speak have done
9 so, we will ask others on the call if they would
10 care to comment and give you the same opportunity.
11 If we reach a point where all who choose to comment
12 have commented and there is still time, we will
13 invite those who have already commented to come
14 back to make additional comments, if they care to.

15 With that, we will begin to take your
16 comments. We ask that you please say your name,
17 spell your name, and if you represent an
18 organization, please let us know that so that our
19 court reporter can capture this information
20 correctly.

21 Now, let me take a look here. Our first

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1 registered commenter is Alejandra BedollaDiaz.
2 Please forgive me if I have butchered your name.
3 And if you are on the line, we would invite you to
4 be the first to make a comment, and you would do
5 that by pressing one, then zero on your telephone
6 keypad to let us know that you're there.

7 AUTOMATED PHONE OPERATOR: Your
8 conference is now in question and answer mode. To
9 summon each question, press one, then zero.

10 MR. GEORGE: Do we have Alejandra?

11 (No audible response)

12 MR. GEORGE: No? Okay. Having not
13 heard from Alejandra, we'll go to the second person
14 who has pre-registered to comment, and that's Randy
15 Gordon.

16 Randy, if you're there, would you
17 please one, then zero on your telephone keypad?

18 (No audible response)

19 MR. GEORGE: Randy Gordon is the second
20 person who has pre-registered to comment.

21 Randy, if you're there would you please

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1 press one, then zero on your telephone keypad?

2 (No audible response)

3 MR. GEORGE: So we're not hearing also
4 from Randy. So we shall go to our third person
5 who's pre-registered. That's Genna Reed.

6 PARTICIPANT: Yes, she is.

7 MR. GEORGE: Genna, if you're there,
8 please press one, then zero on your keypad and go
9 ahead with your comment.

10 AUTOMATED PHONE OPERATOR: You have
11 one question remaining.

12 MS. REED: Hi, this Genna.

13 MR. GEORGE: Hi, Genna. Thanks.

14 MS. REED: Okay. Good afternoon. My
15 name is Genna Reed and I am here representing Food
16 and Water Watch, a non-profit consumer advocacy
17 group that supports safe, accessible and
18 affordable food for consumers and fair access to
19 markets for farmers.

20 We are glad to see that the USDA has
21 decided to forego the finalization of its 2008 rule

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1 for the regulation of genetically engineered
2 plants. We hope that the USDA takes this
3 opportunity to strengthen its regulations under
4 the authority of the Plant Protection Act to
5 protect farmers and consumers.

6 The USDA's current regulatory system
7 for genetically engineered plants is broken.
8 Since the introduction of GMO crops a lack of
9 oversight has led to the stray presence of
10 unapproved GMO crops, contamination of organic and
11 non-GMO crops with GMO content and the decision to
12 allow certain GMO crops to be sold and planted with
13 zero regulatory scrutiny.

14 Food and Water Watch would like to see
15 the USDA improve its monitoring and inspections of
16 experimental field trials to avoid contamination
17 that exists that are continuing to occur due to a
18 lack of oversight. This new regulatory exemption
19 includes contamination prevention measures in
20 addition to compensation of parties harmed by
21 contamination events. This burden should not be

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1 borne by the farmers who are contaminated by GMO
2 presence through no fault of their own. Instead,
3 the USDA should work with patent-holding companies
4 to create a fund that will compensate economically
5 harmed farmers.

6 Additionally, the deregulation process
7 should be altered so that there is
8 co-commercialization monitoring to avoid
9 incidents such as stray GMO wheat found in Oregon
10 and GMO alfalfa found in Washington, and the
11 protections emerged from accidental exposure to
12 risky experimental crops like those producing
13 pharmaceuticals. Finally, no GMO products should
14 be permitted to be commercialized without full
15 review of its unique risks to agriculture and the
16 environment.

17 And now I'll focus my attention on the
18 second question that the USDA posed to the public
19 regarding the noxious weed provision. First, Food
20 and Water Watch supports adding noxious weed
21 provisions to their regulation and to use them to

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1 account for many of the scientific concerns that
2 have been raised about GMO crops, especially those
3 agricultural and environmental risks inherent in
4 many herbicide-tolerant crops. These risks
5 include the enhanced maintenance of existing
6 crops, the creation of new weeds through the flow
7 of genes to wild relatives and potential adverse
8 impacts on biodiversity and beneficial insects.
9 It is imperative that the USDA uses its authority
10 to more broadly interpret the noxious weed
11 provision, especially to include
12 herbicide-tolerant crops.

13 These crops, which make up the vast
14 majority of de-regulated genetically engineered
15 plants, have a range of adverse impacts on the
16 environment and public health.
17 Herbicide-tolerant crops have led to the
18 widespread occurrence of herbicide-resistant
19 weeds which have taken their toll on farmers
20 directly through additional farming and weeding
21 costs and have indirectly led to increased

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1 herbicide use which can impact health risks on
2 residue.

3 The USDA has an increased
4 responsibility to protect the public since it has
5 approved the next generation of herbicide-tolerant
6 crops which can withstand applications of 2-4D and
7 Dicamba. This chemical process cannot be
8 continued indefinitely. Weed resistance to these
9 chemicals will continue to proliferate and
10 application of more noxious herbicides will
11 increase exponentially. The more herbicide we
12 apply to aggressive weeds like waterhemp, Palmer
13 amaranth, horseweed and kochia, the more likely it
14 is for biotech resistance to multiple herbicides
15 will spread in the United States. This likely
16 scenario will make farming more difficult and more
17 expensive for farmers.

18 Increased use of drift-prone
19 herbicides like 2,4-D and Dicamba to combat
20 resistant weeds will also impact organic and
21 non-GMO farmers. Dicamba and 2,4-D are known for

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1 their negative impacts on target and non-target
2 plant development and cause abnormal growth and
3 death. Since Dicamba and 2,4-D are especially
4 prone to drift, any specialty crops like tomatoes,
5 grapes, potatoes that are grown near fields sprayed
6 with these herbicides could be damaged causing near
7 losses.

8 Not only will herbicide-tolerant crops
9 and weeds cause drift-associated farm-level
10 losses, but herbicide exposure will lead to health
11 issues. There are documented negative health
12 impacts associated with 2,4-D exposure. APHIS
13 must closely examine how these impacts would be
14 amplified with the more frequent use of 2,4-D on
15 2,4-D-tolerant corn and soybeans. Studies have
16 found that men who apply 2,4-D have lower sperm
17 counts and more sperm abnormalities than those
18 unexposed to the herbicide. And a study on
19 California farm workers concluded that working on
20 a farm that sprayed 2,4-D raises the risk of
21 Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

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1 APHIS has the opportunity to stop this
2 scenario before it unfolds in U.S. agriculture by
3 exercising its Noxious Weed Authority to assess and
4 regulate herbicide-tolerant crop systems. In its
5 regulation of noxious weeds APHIS should include
6 protections against the following: enhanced
7 weediness of existing GMO crops, increased
8 herbicide and pesticide use and associated
9 impacts, like weed and pest resistance, gene flow
10 and other routes of seed and crop contamination,
11 animal and human health impact to the whole crop
12 system, damage to biodiversity, impact to
13 beneficial non-target organisms, and the ability
14 to disrupt markets, both domestic and export
15 markets.

16 Food and Water Watch urges the USDA to
17 thoroughly consider our recommendations for
18 approving regulatory oversight over genetically
19 engineered plants. Without a substantial ~~overall~~
20 overhaul of the current system, the USDA would be
21 negotiating -- I'm finishing up. This is my last

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1 sentence.

2 MR. GEORGE: Oh, perfect.

3 MS. REED: Without substantial overall
4 of the current system, the USDA would be neglecting
5 its responsibility to protect and preserve U.S.
6 agriculture for generations to come. Thank you
7 for your consideration of these comments.

8 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Genna.

9 So I think at this time we shall ask
10 whether Alejandra BedollaDiaz has come onto to the
11 line. Do we have names, Robin?

12 (No audible response)

13 MR. GEORGE: Okay. Or --

14 PARTICIPANT: I mean, we have names,
15 but she's not in here.

16 MR. GEORGE: Randy Gordon? Has he
17 joined us? Randy Gordon, G-O-R-D-O-N.

18 (No audible response)

19 MR. GEORGE: No?

20 PARTICIPANT: Not under that name.

21 MR. GEORGE: Okay. In that case we

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1 shall go to our next registered commenter, who is
2 Kristina Hubbard.

3 PARTICIPANT: Yes.

4 MR. GEORGE: Can we open Kristina's
5 mic, please?

6 Kristina, you need to press one, then
7 zero, please. Press one, then zero.

8 AUTOMATED PHONE OPERATOR: You have
9 one question remaining.

10 MS. HUBBARD: Hi there. This is
11 Kristina Hubbard. Can you hear me?

12 MR. GEORGE: We sure can.

13 MS. HUBBARD: Hi there. The spelling
14 for my name is Kristina, K-R-I-S-T-I-N-A, Hubbard,
15 H-U-B-B-A-R-D.

16 MR. GEORGE: Thank you.

17 MS. HUBBARD: I'm the Efficacy
18 Director for Organic Seed Alliance, and we are a
19 national non-profit research, education advocacy
20 organization. And for more than a decade now we
21 have worked to promote policies that support the

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1 success and integrity of organic feed systems
2 across the U.S.

3 And I want to begin by saying that we're
4 really grateful to the USDA for hosting these
5 webinars and initiating discussions on updating
6 regulations under the Plant Protection Act. We
7 plan to provide longer and more detailed written
8 comments later on in this process, but today I just
9 want to answer a couple of the question posed by
10 the Department for these webinars.

11 First of all, the Department has said
12 that it wants to explore policy alternatives and
13 has also asked of webinar participants whether
14 non-regulatory solutions exist. And I want to say
15 that while there may be other authorities worth
16 exploring in the context of improving oversight of
17 the products of biotechnology, additional existing
18 authorities that may exist shouldn't take the place
19 of developing new and stronger regulations under
20 the Plant Protection Act that better reflect the
21 Department's broad authority to address the full

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1 range of direct and indirect impacts of
2 biotechnology products.

3 We're very supportive of the
4 Department's decisions to withdraw its 2008
5 proposal that would have updated these regulations
6 and we encourage the rapid development of new and
7 stronger regulations that we need to protect the
8 environment, human health and farmers and their
9 markets from impacts resulting from genetically
10 engineered crops, especially genetically
11 engineered crops that end up where they're not
12 wanted.

13 Furthermore, non-regulatory solutions
14 and other non-binding activities on their own have
15 not been effective to date in avoiding the problem
16 of contamination events in the feed and food supply
17 including at the experimental field trial stage as
18 we've heard have been the case over the last few
19 years, incidences involving alfalfa, wheat, corn.

20 Next, I want to respond to the first
21 question posed for this webinar, the question about

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1 whether APHIS should regulate based on the
2 characteristics of biotechnology products and the
3 potential risks they may pose, or by the process
4 by which they were created. Organic Seed Alliance
5 believes that APHIS should establish regulations
6 that not only capture all process of genetically
7 engineering. That could be the trigger.
8 Process-based regulations are the only practical
9 way to oversee these new technologies, and it
10 developed an approach, I want to add, that was
11 recommended in 2002 by the National Academy of
12 Sciences, again that the process should serve as
13 a trigger for regulation.

14 We're concerned that product-based
15 criteria would be almost impossible to establish
16 and predict before regulatory review and we're also
17 concerned that this approach would leave it up to
18 industry to determine which products should be
19 regulated. Among concerns for this approach would
20 include engendering trust among our trade
21 partners.

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1 We also believe there are no categories
2 of genetically engineered products that could go
3 completely unregulated. We believe that stronger
4 regulations are long overdue to protect the
5 environment, health and other sectors of
6 agriculture and trade. And it's important to
7 remember how much we've learned about the impact
8 of biotechnology since APHIS first developed
9 regulations in the 1980s. And again, in our
10 written comments we will go into more detail about
11 the criteria we think APHIS should use to determine
12 products for regulation and the protection goals
13 that should be included when analyzing new products
14 of biotechnology, especially under the
15 Department's Noxious Weed Authority.

16 But I'd want to end my comments here on
17 this call by summarizing the goal for stronger
18 regulation that we believe can and should be
19 implemented under the USDA's current authority as
20 provided by the Plant Protection Act. We feel that
21 APHIS can fill existing regulatory holes by

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1 implementing its active authority, conducting
2 independent analyses of socioeconomic and
3 environmental impacts mandating correction
4 practices, especially on the part of owners and
5 users of genetically engineered crops.

6 Currently the entire burden of
7 protecting the organic and non-GMO sectors from the
8 unwanted presence of genetically engineered
9 crops -- that burden currently falls squarely on
10 the shoulders of those who not only choose to avoid
11 the technologies, but have to avoid the
12 technologies in order to meet the expectations of
13 their customers and the markets they serve. And
14 we also believe that there's a need to create a fair
15 compensation mechanism for when contamination
16 prevention fails so that those harmed by the
17 unwanted presence of genetically engineered crops
18 can recoup some of those losses.

19 We believe that we need strong
20 monitoring and oversight of experimental field
21 trials and there's a need to establish a monitoring

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1 of products of biotechnology including after their
2 commercialization.

3 So with that I want to thank the
4 Department very much for withdrawing its 2008
5 proposal, for initiating this conversation and
6 taking very seriously the need to develop new
7 regulations under their authority of the Plant
8 Protection Act. Thank you again for the
9 opportunity to give comments.

10 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Kristina.

11 Okay. So I will ask again whether
12 Alejandra has joined us or Randy Gordon?

13 PARTICIPANT: Randy Gordon is on the
14 webinar now.

15 MR. GEORGE: Okay. Randy, if you
16 would please press one, then zero on your telephone
17 keypad, we will be happy to receive your comments.

18 (No audible response)

19 MR. GEORGE: Randy Gordon, if you're
20 hearing me, please press one, then zero on your
21 telephone keypad. We'll be happy to receive your

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1 comments.

2 (No audible response)

3 PARTICIPANT: I think he typed in
4 messages, too.

5 MR. GEORGE: Okay. He may have
6 stepped away, so we shall go ahead to our next
7 pre-registered commenter, who is Brian Lehmann.
8 Brian?

9 PARTICIPANT: He's here.

10 MR. GEORGE: Would you please press
11 one, then zero on your telephone keypad?

12 (No audible response)

13 MR. GEORGE: Brian Lehmann, if you're
14 on the call and still wish to make a comment, please
15 press one, then zero on your telephone keypad and
16 let us know.

17 PARTICIPANT: I typed him a note, too.

18 MR. GEORGE: Nope? Okay.

19 PARTICIPANT: He's logged in.

20 MR. GEORGE: He's logged in, but he's
21 not there. So we shall move ahead to our next

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1 pre-registered commenter, who is Clint Nesbitt.

2 PARTICIPANT: He's logged in.

3 MR. GEORGE: Clint, if you would press
4 one, then zero, please?

5 (No audible response)

6 MR. GEORGE: I'm beginning to wonder if
7 we're having some kind of --

8 PARTICIPANT: Clint's typing a
9 message.

10 MR. GEORGE: Okay.

11 PARTICIPANT: He says he's here.

12 MR. GEORGE: Okay.

13 AUTOMATED PHONE OPERATOR: You have
14 one question remaining.

15 MR. GEORGE: Here we go.

16 MR. NESBITT: Hello, this is Clint
17 Nesbitt. Can you hear me?

18 MR. GEORGE: We sure can, Clint.

19 MR. NESBITT: Very good. Thank you.

20 So this is Clint Nesbitt. I am the Food and
21 Agriculture Director of Regulatory Affairs at the

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1 Biotechnology Industry Organization. BIO
2 represents nearly 1,000 companies, academic
3 institutions, statewide technology centers and
4 related organizations around the world. Thank you
5 for the opportunity to provide input as APHIS
6 considers possible revisions to its ag biotech
7 regulations.

8 | APHIS plays an important role in
9 protecting U.S. agriculture by preventing the
10 introduction and dissemination of plant pests and
11 noxious weeds into the U.S. Since the early '90s
12 APHIS has used its Plant Pest Authority to oversee
13 the products of ag biotech on the basis that the
14 agency has reason to believe that some GE organisms
15 | can plant pests. This ~~has~~ system has provided the
16 regulated community with the ability to conduct
17 research and development of beneficial new
18 products while assuring consumers and markets that
19 the products have undergone regulatory review and
20 have been appropriately evaluated before being
21 introduced into commerce.

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1 But this regulatory system as it
2 currently operates has subjected developers to
3 increasingly overt compliance costs, unclear and
4 inconsistent requirements and uncertainty and
5 variability in the process driving up product
6 development costs and delaying their availability
7 to growers and consumers. APHIS has overseen tens
8 of thousands of field trials, hundreds of thousands
9 of genetic constructs and completed in-depth risk
10 assessments, and more than 100 deregulated
11 products and has never identified a single GE
12 organism to be a plant pest. This has resulted in
13 regulatory oversight that has grown to be vastly
14 disproportionate to the punitive risks that APHIS
15 uses to justify oversight at a high cost to
16 developers, growers, consumers and taxpayers.

17 APHIS should use this opportunity to
18 reflect on its nearly 30 years of experience
19 regulating ag biotech and to ensure that the level
20 oversight takes into account APHIS' familiarity
21 with the technology, the breadth of current

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1 scientific knowledge and the long history of
2 safety.

3 Regarding APHIS' question No. 1, APHIS
4 should continue to impose regulations based upon
5 the plant pest risk posed to the product and not
6 the technology used to produce it. Furthermore,
7 the kind of risk overseen by APHIS should be
8 consistent with its authority under the Plant
9 Protection Act, or PPA. The PPA grants APHIS the
10 authority to prevent the introduction and
11 establishment of plant pests, and the existing
12 regulations implement that authority. Therefore,
13 APHIS should regulate only those organisms that
14 pose such a risk. Based upon experience gained to
15 date APHIS should exclude or exempt from regulation
16 under 340 all organisms for which there is no
17 scientifically plausible reason to believe that
18 they are likely to present plant health risk.

19 Regarding question 2, APHIS already has
20 existing regulations by which it regulates noxious
21 weeds. More than 100 risk assessments of ag

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1 biotech crops included consideration of weed risk
2 and APHIS has never affirmatively identified the
3 GE organism with increased weediness, much less
4 identified one to be a noxious weed. However, if
5 APHIS believes a product of ag biotech may be a
6 noxious weed, it has existing mechanisms in the PPA
7 and 7 CFR 360 to evaluate that risk and to impose
8 appropriate regulatory oversight. In fact, APHIS
9 has already used this mechanism to assess the
10 noxious weed risk of certain GE organisms.

11 Importantly, APHIS should refrain from
12 creating a contradictory level of standards with
13 regard to what it considers to be a noxious weed.
14 As APHIS stated in the preamble to its 2008 proposed
15 rule, noxious weeds are plants that are likely to
16 be aggressively invasive, have significant
17 negative impacts and are extremely difficult to
18 manage or control once established. Should APHIS
19 identify such a plant, GE or not, it has the
20 authority to regulate it. However, APHIS would
21 risk contorting the statutory authority beyond

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1 logic and common sense if it were to use one
2 standard for identifying non-GE weeds and plants
3 as noxious weeds while using a different standard
4 for GE plants. A noxious weed is a noxious weed
5 regardless of its origin.

6 Regarding question 3, APHIS has
7 sufficient authority in the PPA to protect U.S.
8 agriculture from a list of plant pests and noxious
9 weeds. When writing and enacting the PPA in 2000,
10 many years after APHIS began regulating GE crops,
11 Congress had the opportunity but did not see a need
12 or value to provide USDA additional oversight of
13 GE crops, nor have they identified a specific need
14 to seek additional legal authority. In the
15 absence of an unidentified need APHIS' would run
16 the risk of appearing to seek to regulate products
17 derived from bio technology for the sake of
18 regulation per se rather than addressing a specific
19 protection goal.

20 Regarding question 4, BIO encourages
21 APHIS to use e this opportunity to explore policy

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1 actions that make implementation of its existing
2 regulations more consistent with the risk posed by
3 the activities it oversees. A few examples
4 include: First, APHIS should continue to strive
5 to meet its 2011 regulatory timeline for making
6 final determinations on petitions in order to
7 improve the time limits and predictability of its
8 reviews.

9 Second, APHIS should continue to expand
10 the use of the extension process to more quickly
11 remove from regulation organisms similar to those
12 already evaluated by APHIS and found not to pose
13 plant pest risk.

14 Third, APHIS should identify
15 categories of organisms that can be excluded or
16 exempted from regulation because there is no
17 scientifically plausible reason to believe they
18 might present a plant pest risk.

19 Fourth, APHIS should ensure that
20 oversight of field trials is proportionate to the
21 actual risk posed by the activity. APHIS should

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1 reverse this trend towards greater regulatory
2 burden imposed upon notification. Notifications
3 were originally intended to be a streamlined
4 version of the permit process for those organisms
5 familiar to APHIS. Oversight and notification has
6 grown so much over time, however, that the
7 regulatory burden is barely distinguishable from
8 that imposed on permits, if not greater. Further,
9 APHIS should refrain from changing which organisms
10 are eligible for notification, eroding the use of
11 the process by gradually pushing more organisms
12 into the permit process.

13 MR. GEORGE: Clint, I just want --

14 MR. NESBITT: Finally --

15 MR. GEORGE: You got two minutes.

16 MR. NESBITT: I'm wrapping up here.

17 Perfect.

18 MR. GEORGE: Okay. Great. Thank
19 you.

20 MR. NESBITT: And so finally, BIO
21 strongly urges APHIS to refrain from using

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1 non-regulatory approaches when they become merely
2 a means to circumvent public comment and
3 rulemaking. APHIS should ensure that any
4 qualities it considers are fully consistent with
5 the statutory and regulatory authority, include
6 stakeholder input and are implemented only after
7 following the appropriate administered
8 procedures.

9 BIO welcomes the opportunity to provide
10 APHIS feedback on the functioning on the regulatory
11 system and how it may be improved in the future.
12 We strongly encourage APHIS to utilize its nearly
13 30 years of experience to ensure that oversight
14 remains consistent with APHIS' mission of
15 protecting U.S. agriculture from the impact of
16 plant pests and noxious weeds and that APHIS' level
17 of oversight is proportionate to the degree to
18 which the product of biotechnology may pose such
19 risks.

20 Thank you for your time and
21 consideration.

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1 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Clint.

2 So, we shall go to the next
3 pre-registered commenter, who is Adam Costanza.
4 Adam Costanza, if you're on the line, would you
5 please press one, then zero on your telephone
6 keypad? We'll open your mic and be glad to take
7 your comments.

8 AUTOMATED PHONE OPERATOR: You have
9 one question remaining.

10 MR. GEORGE: Adam, are you there?

11 MR. COSTANZA: Can you hear me now?

12 MR. GEORGE: Yes, we can. There we go.
13 Please go ahead.

14 MR. COSTANZA: Thank you for hosting
15 this forum, and I will comments online for the
16 Institute of Forest Biosciences. Thank you.

17 MR. GEORGE: Adam, could I ask you to
18 please just say your name and spell your name for
19 us, please?

20 MR. COSTANZA: Adam Costanza, A-D-A-M,
21 C-O-S-T-A-N-Z-A.

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1 MR. GEORGE: Thank you. Please go
2 ahead.

3 MR. COSTANZA: So I wanted to thank you
4 for hosting this forum and I will provide comments
5 online for the Institute of Forest Biosciences --

6 MR. GEORGE: Adam, I can't hear you.
7 Even when we could, it was breaking up a little bit.
8 Are you still there?

9 MR. COSTANZA: Yes, I'm still here.

10 MR. GEORGE: Okay. Please go ahead.

11 MR. COSTANZA: And, I'm sorry for the
12 poor connection. I just wanted to thank you for
13 hosting this forum, and I will provide my comments
14 another way, due the poor connection.

15 MR. GEORGE: Okay. So, you're going
16 to pass because of the connection. If you'd like
17 to perhaps call us back? That would be fine. We
18 might get a better connection if you were to call
19 back.

20 And in the meantime, we'll go to another
21 commenter. And we'll go back to ones who have

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1 signed up to comment but have not yet commented.
2 We asked their names once before. That would be
3 Alejandra BedollaDiaz. If you're on the call,
4 please press one, then zero on your telephone
5 keypad.

6 (No audible response)

7 MR. GEORGE: And not hearing that you
8 are, then we shall ask Randy Gordon, if you're on
9 the call, to please press one, then zero so that
10 we can take your comment.

11 (No audible response)

12 MR. GEORGE: So we'll give Randy a
13 moment. Perhaps it's on mute? No.

14 (No audible response)

15 MR. GEORGE: Okay. And that's
16 everybody that has signed up that we have on the
17 list. If there are others on the call who would
18 care to make a comment, anyone who would like to
19 comment can do so by simply pressing one, then zero
20 on your telephone keypad and letting us know that
21 you would like to comment.

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1 (No audible response)

2 MR. GEORGE: I see that Adam has let us
3 know that he will provide his comments online.

4 Is there anyone else on the phone who's
5 perhaps listening in who was not pre-registered to
6 comment who would like to comment? Now is the time
7 to do it. All you need to do is press one, then
8 zero on your touch-tone phone. We'll be glad to
9 take your comment.

10 (No audible response)

11 MR. GEORGE: Okay. I will repeat one
12 last time that if you'd like to make a comment, just
13 press one, then zero. Hearing, however, that no
14 one has indicated their desire to make a comment,
15 we shall take a break. And what we'll do, there
16 will be a slide that will come up that indicates
17 that we are in a break. You will hear music. If
18 you're on the call and would like to make a comment,
19 just press one, then zero at any time. We will see
20 that and we will invite you to make a comment and
21 open your mic.

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1 So we're going to take a little break.
2 We'll come back every 5 or 10 minutes or so just
3 to remind anyone who may still be on the call that
4 we're here to take your comments and we welcome
5 those comments.

6 Meanwhile, if any of you who have
7 already commented would care to say more or to
8 elaborate on your comments, you can do so by
9 pressing one, then zero on your touch-tone phone.

10 So are there any commenters in the
11 queue?

12 (No audible response)

13 MR. GEORGE: Seeing that there are
14 none, we're going to take a little break and we'll
15 be checking back in in the next five minutes or so.
16 Thanks very much.

17 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
18 went off the record at 6:42 p.m. and resumed at 6:51
19 p.m.)

20 MR. GEORGE: Okay. So we're back.
21 This is the engagement webinar on APHIS

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1 Biotechnology Regulations. My name is Dick
2 George. I'm here with Neil Hoffman. We're here
3 to receive your comments. If you would care to
4 comment, all you need to do is press one, then zero
5 on your telephone keypad and we'll see that and
6 we'll be happy to take your comment.

7 Also, if anyone who has already
8 commented would care to add to their comments,
9 please feel free to do so. Just hit one, then zero
10 on your telephone keypad, please.

11 So is there any -- we have no commenters
12 in the queue. We'll give it a few more seconds.

13 (No audible response)

14 MR. GEORGE: So in that case, we shall
15 take another break for a few minutes. We'll be
16 checking back in every five or six minutes or so.
17 And again, you can hit one and zero at any time and
18 we'll open up the line to take your comments.

19 Thank you. We'll take another break.

20 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
21 went off the record at 6:52 p.m. and resumed at 7:06

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1 p.m.)

2 DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. We're back to see
3 if anyone else is there to make a comment. If
4 you're interested in making a comment, you can
5 please do so now by pressing your telephone keypad
6 and pressing one and then zero. Again, if you'd
7 like to make a comment, please press one and zero.
8 We're at the public meeting for 340.

9 We have a comment.

10 MR. GEORGE: Terrific.

11 DR. HOFFMAN: Terrific.

12 AUTOMATED PHONE OPERATOR: You have
13 one question remaining.

14 DR. HOFFMAN: Please state your name
15 and spell it for us first.

16 MS. LIPSTREU: Good evening. My name
17 is Amalie Lipstreu. Can you hear me okay?

18 DR. HOFFMAN: Yes. Yes, we can.
19 Spell your name, Amalie.

20 MS. LIPSTREU: My name is spelled
21 A-M-A-L-I-E. And the last name is

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1 L-I-P-S-T-R-E-U.

2 DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

3 MS. LIPSTREU: And I am with the Ohio
4 Ecological Food and Farm Association, otherwise
5 known as OFA for short. OFA is a grassroots
6 organization representing farmers, researchers
7 and interested consumers. OFA also operates one
8 of the country's oldest USDA-accredited organic
9 certification agencies.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to
11 provide verbal comments on how biotechnology
12 should be regulated. I just have a few comments
13 to share and will be following up these verbal
14 comment with more detailed written comments in the
15 future.

16 We believe that stronger regulations
17 can and should be implemented under the current
18 authority within the Plant Protection Act.
19 Specifically, mandatory contamination prevention
20 practices are needed for users of GE crops, as well
21 as fair compensation mechanisms when contamination

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1 occurs.

2 Predictability and uncertainty were
3 brought up earlier this evening. Those are very
4 important goals for all businesses.
5 Unfortunately, for organic and non-GE producers
6 the level of business certainty is significantly
7 reduced as a result of the contamination by
8 genetically engineered crops.

9 In response to the first question, we
10 believe that new regulations should be
11 process-based and that no GE products should be
12 unregulated, as again their impact to organic and
13 non-GE producers is very real and affects the
14 viability of both the organic and the conventional
15 non-GE farming industry.

16 Contrary to being anti-science, we
17 believe in sound science on GE technology. And we
18 also ask that in determining what is regulated
19 APHIS should ask whether there have been
20 independent longitudinal and peer-reviewed
21 studies on the proposed biotechnology.

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1 APHIS should implement its Noxious Weed
2 Authority to regulate GE crops and other plants and
3 this goal of needing to protect against increased
4 herbicide and pesticide use and the damages
5 associated with that use, as well as their impacts
6 to beneficial organisms, including pollinators.

7 Finally, non-regulatory solutions are
8 not effective when stopping the spread of GE
9 contamination. It's very important that there is
10 regulatory oversight and mandatory prevention
11 measures in place to protect organic and non-GE
12 producers.

13 Again, I really appreciate the
14 opportunity to provide some comment. And thank
15 you for the time.

16 DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

17 MR. GEORGE: Thanks very much.

18 DR. HOFFMAN: Any other commenters who
19 would like to speak? If you wish to speak, please
20 press your telephone keypad one and then zero.

21 (No audible response)

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1 DR. HOFFMAN: Anyone else?

2 (No audible response)

3 DR. HOFFMAN: Give it one more minute
4 or so and then we'll take another five-minute break
5 or so.

6 (No audible response)

7 DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. Doesn't sound
8 like there are any takers. So we're going to sign
9 off very briefly again for about five minutes or
10 so.

11 MR. GEORGE: Thank you. Yes, if you
12 want to press one and then zero any time even during
13 this break, we shall see that and we'll come back
14 on to receive your comment.

15 Now having said that, we'll take a short
16 break and be back shortly. Thanks.

17 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
18 went off the record at 7:11 p.m. and resumed at 7:18
19 p.m.)

20 MR. GEORGE: Okay. We're back. This
21 Dick George. I'm with Neil Hoffman. We're here

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1 to take your comments on APHIS biotechnology
2 regulations. If anyone would care to make a
3 comment, please press one, then zero on your
4 telephone keypad. And we'll see that and we'll be
5 happy to take your comment.

6 And while we hope someone is in the
7 process of doing that, I will explain because we
8 had a question, the comments that are being made
9 in this meeting and the other two meetings which
10 will follow in the next two weeks will be
11 transcribed, and they will be available on our
12 website within the next two, three weeks or so. So
13 that website is
14 www.aphis.usda.gov/APHISVirtualMeetings, all one
15 word. That's
16 www.aphis.usda.gov/APHISVirtualMeetings.
17 Transcriptions will be there within the next two
18 or three weeks.

19 So seeing that there's no one in our
20 queue, we shall repeat that if you would like to
21 make a comment, just press one, then zero on your

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1 telephone keypad. We'll see that and we will open
2 your mic and be glad to take your comment.

3 So seeing that there is no one in the
4 queue, we'll take another break and come back in
5 another six, seven minutes or so. Thanks so much.

6 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
7 went off the record at 7:20 p.m. and resumed at 7:29
8 p.m.)

9 DR. HOFFMAN: Hello, I'm Neil Hoffman.
10 I'm here with Dick George and we're taking your
11 comments on revisions to 340. If you would like
12 to make a public comment today, please press your
13 one and zero on your telephone keypad. Is there
14 anyone out there who would like to make a comment?

15 (No audible response)

16 DR. HOFFMAN: We don't have anyone in
17 the queue now. We'll stay on here for another
18 minute or so. If you'd like to make a comment,
19 please one and then zero.

20 (No audible response)

21 DR. HOFFMAN: There seemed to have been

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1 someone who had pressed their keypad while we were
2 on mute. Was that by accident or do you want to
3 speak?

4 (No audible response)

5 DR. HOFFMAN: Please press one and then
6 zero.

7 (No audible response)

8 DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. No one's in our
9 queue still, so I think we're going to go back on
10 break. While we're on break if you want to hit one
11 and then zero, we will know that you want to speak
12 and we'll come right back on the air. We promise
13 you.

14 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
15 went off the record at 7:31 p.m. and resumed at 7:40
16 p.m.)

17 MR. GEORGE: Hi. Welcome back. I'm
18 Dick George. I'm here to take comments on APHIS
19 regulation of biotechnology. We invite you to
20 make a comment if you care to. If you're on the
21 phone, please press one, then zero on your

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1 telephone keypad. We will see that on our screen
2 and we'll be glad to open your mic and take your
3 comment.

4 So is there anyone who would like to
5 make a comment at this time? We'll be here until
6 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time tonight to take comments.

7 And I see that there's no one in the
8 queue. And seeing that, we shall take another
9 break for about eight minutes or so, eight or 10
10 minutes, I think. However, if during that time
11 you'd like to make a comment, press one, then zero.
12 We'll see that and we'll come right back on. So,
13 we'll see you after the break, if not sooner.
14 Thanks so much.

15 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
16 went off the record at 7:41 p.m. and resumed at 7:49
17 p.m.)

18 MR. GEORGE: Hi. I'm Dick George back
19 at our meeting to take public comment on the subject
20 of APHIS biotechnology regulations. We'd invite
21 anyone who's on the call who would care to make a

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1 comment press one, then zero on your telephone
2 keypad. We'll see that and we will be more than
3 happy to open your mic to take your comment.

4 And while we're waiting to see if anyone
5 takes me up on that, I will mention that there be
6 two more public comment meetings. One will be next
7 week, the 12th. And another on the 20th. And so,
8 those meetings will be just like this one, the same
9 format.

10 So we welcome your comments. Also,
11 I'll mention that all of the comments made here
12 tonight will be transcribed and available on our
13 website, which is
14 www.aphis.usda.gov/APHISVirtualMeetings.

15 So seeing that we still no one in the
16 queue, we shall take another break. And I invite
17 you to press one and then zero at any time during
18 the break. We'll see that and immediately come
19 back on to receive your comment.

20 So thanks for being with us and we'll
21 be checking back here in another 5 or 10 minutes

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1 or so. Thanks so much.

2 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
3 went off the record at 7:51 p.m. and resumed at 8:08
4 p.m.)

5 MR. GEORGE: Hi, and welcome back.
6 This is our meeting to take public comments on the
7 subject of APHIS biotechnology regulations. If
8 you'd like to make a comment, please press one and
9 then zero on your telephone keypad and we will see
10 that and welcome to make a comment.

11 So at this time would anyone like to
12 make a comment, please? One, then zero.

13 AUTOMATED PHONE OPERATOR: You have
14 one question remaining.

15 MR. GEORGE: Beautiful.

16 MR. LEHMANN: Yes, hi. Can you hear
17 me?

18 MR. GEORGE: We sure can. If you would
19 please start by saying your name and spelling your
20 name for us so we get the spelling right, and then
21 go ahead.

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1 MR. LEHMANN: Okay. Of course. I'm
2 Brian Lehmann, B-R-I-A-N, L-E-H-M-A-N-N.

3 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Brian. Go
4 ahead.

5 MR. LEHMANN: All right. USDA Organic
6 is probably the largest consumer market-driven
7 growth sector in American agriculture, yet only
8 organic farmers are responsible for creating
9 buffer zones, testing at-risk seed, delaying
10 plantings, selecting pollinators and more all to
11 avoid unwanted GMO cross-contamination.

12 The biotech side has argued that since
13 organic commands a premium price at market, those
14 conditions are somehow justified. How is that?
15 Isn't the premium a result of market demand and hard
16 work? Yet under current circumstances the U.S.
17 organic cannot even meet its own demand. This
18 would seem a perverse fulfillment of the biotech
19 mantra that organic cannot feed the world. But the
20 absence of containment of unwanted gene flow,
21 organic can have a very hard time indeed. So why

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1 should biotechnology get carte blanche for
2 operations?

3 Take question No. 1: Should APHIS
4 regulate based on characteristics or process? One
5 might wonder why it's either/or, but all crops,
6 including new generations that are products of
7 biotechnology should be regulated. Biotech is a
8 radical departure from natural hybridization.
9 You might say that amounts to some philosophical
10 exception, but statutory language clearly supports
11 the concept qualifying unwanted GMO
12 cross-contamination as damaging or injurious.

13 The Department might not want to admit
14 it. It doesn't assert it when its position is
15 given great deference by the courts, but what was
16 the proposed partial deregulation of GMO alfalfa
17 if not isolation distances based on statutory
18 authority? So the authority is there, even under
19 current language.

20 On to question 2: Should APHIS add
21 noxious weed provisions to biotechnology

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1 regulation? Absolutely. Because APHIS cannot
2 overlook risk assessments including on newer GMO
3 generations perhaps not derived from or allied with
4 so-called plant pests. The statutory language for
5 noxious weeds includes public health and
6 environmental considerations. And by the way, the
7 definition of "weed" includes any undesirable or
8 troublesome plant.

9 But again, even under noxious weed
10 provisions, unwanted GMO cross-contamination can
11 be considered damaging or injurious. You know,
12 USDA's got to enforce the law. Patent holders must
13 be held accountable if prevented measures fail.
14 It doesn't make sense for organic to get no respect
15 in this regard.

16 I think USDA is conducting a survey to
17 see if there's a problem. Well, if an organic
18 grower has a load rejected and all parties have
19 taken appropriate precautions, the patent holder
20 of the offending trait or traits is responsible for
21 pecuniary damages. That's the type of protection

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1 consumers and suppliers are entitled to under the
2 PPA. And by the way, there's already enough
3 concern to warrant that all organic corn get tested
4 for cause so that consumers without contracts are
5 equally protected, but that's an argument for the
6 National Organic Program. But if we in the organic
7 community are entitled to protections under PPA and
8 regulators aren't providing it, then that's
9 objectionable.

10 And I would just close by saying UN
11 level studies have recently identified
12 agroecological reforms as needed to feed the world,
13 so we don't really need to pretend that
14 biotechnology is helping. Thanks for your
15 consideration of these remarks.

16 MR. GEORGE: Thank you for your
17 comments.

18 If there's anyone else on the phone who
19 would like to make a comment, please let us know
20 by pressing one and then zero on your telephone
21 keypad.

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1 (No audible response)

2 MR. GEORGE: One and then zero on your
3 telephone keypad.

4 (No audible response)

5 MR. GEORGE: If not, we shall take a
6 break. We'll be checking back every six or eight
7 minutes or so. And even during the break if you'd
8 like to comment, just press one and then zero.
9 We'll see on our screens and we'll open your mic
10 and gladly take your comment.

11 So with that, we'll take another short
12 break. Thanks so much.

13 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
14 went off the record at 8:14 p.m. and resumed at 8:23
15 p.m.)

16 MR. GEORGE: Okay. We're back. I'm
17 Dick George. We're here to take your comments on
18 APHIS biotechnology regulations. We welcome your
19 comments. If you'd like to join us and to make a
20 comment, please press one and then zero on your
21 telephone keypad.

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1 I will mention while we have the chance
2 that if you'd like to make a written comment instead
3 of a spoken one, you can go to regulations.gov,
4 www.regulations.gov, and you can leave a written
5 comment there. What you could do is enter the
6 search box -- at regulations.gov you would enter
7 APHIS-2015-0036 in the search box. That will take
8 you to this docket where you can make your comments.
9 APHIS-2015-0036 at regulations.gov.

10 Seeing that we have no one in the queue,
11 we'll take another break and be back in say 10
12 minutes or so. In the meantime, even during the
13 break, if you'd like to make a comment, press one
14 then zero. We'll see it and we'll come back on to
15 receive your comment. Thanks so much.

16 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
17 went off the record at 8:24 p.m. and resumed at 8:38
18 p.m.)

19 MR. GEORGE: Okay. I am Dick George.
20 We're taking comments on APHIS biotechnology
21 regulations. We welcome a comment from you. And

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1 if you would care to make one, please press one and
2 then zero on your telephone keypad and we'll be glad
3 to take your comment.

4 I will mention while we have the chance
5 that the transcripts from the comments tonight will
6 be placed on our website within the next couple of
7 weeks. And our website is [www.aphis](http://www.aphis.usda.gov), A-P-H-I-S,
8 [.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov), G-O-V/APHISVirtualMeetings. The
9 transcripts will be posted there within the next
10 couple of weeks. And also you will find there a
11 lot of background information about our
12 regulations and some history of attempts to adjust
13 our regulations over the years.

14 So if you'd like to make a written
15 comment, that's also possible. You can make that
16 comment any time through June 22nd at
17 regulations.gov is the website. And you would
18 simply enter the docket number, which is APHIS,
19 A-P-H-I-S, -2015-0036. Put that into the search
20 box at regulations.gov. It will take you to a
21 place where you can make your written comment, if

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1 you care to.

2 Having said that, I will invite once
3 again anyone on the phone to make a comment by
4 pressing one and then zero.

5 (No audible response)

6 MR. GEORGE: And seeing that we have
7 none, we will take another break and we'll be back
8 in I'm going to say 10 minutes or so. So we'll see
9 you then. Press one and then zero in the
10 intervening time if you care to and we'll come back
11 on immediately and take the call. Thanks so much.

12 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
13 went off the record at 8:40 p.m. and resumed at 8:52
14 p.m.)

15 MR. GEORGE: Hi, I'm Dick George and
16 we're back. We're here to take your comments on
17 APHIS regulation of biotechnology, and we welcome
18 comments you have. We'd invite you to do so by
19 pressing one and then zero on your telephone
20 keypad, and then we will welcome you on to the call
21 and take your comment.

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1 MR. GEORGE: We will be stopping
2 | tonight at 9:00, in about ~~01~~10 minutes Eastern
3 Time. And so, we welcome you to make a comment now.
4 And looking at our board, I see that there is no
5 one in the queue at the moment. If you'd like to
6 make a comment, we have 10 more minutes to take
7 comments. If you've already made a comment and
8 you'd like to elaborate on it, we welcome that as
9 well.

10 So, I see that there is no one in our
11 list at the moment, and so we'll take another break
12 and we'll come back in just a minute or so before
13 9:00 to take any final comment that anyone may have
14 and then we'll close the meeting from there.

15 So press one, then zero, please to make
16 a comment.

17 (No audible response)

18 MR. GEORGE: And seeing that there are
19 none, we'll break until just a couple minutes
20 before 9:00. Thanks so much.

21 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter

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1 went off the record at 8:53 p.m. and resumed at 8:59
2 p.m.)

3 MR. GEORGE: Okay. We're back. And
4 we'll ask for the last time that if anyone would
5 like to make a comment on APHIS regulation of
6 biotechnology, please do so at this time by
7 pressing one and then zero on your telephone
8 keypad, and we'll be happy to take your comment.

9 So we'll take a second or two to see if
10 anyone takes us up on this offer.

11 (No audible response)

12 MR. GEORGE: And it appears that no one
13 is. And so, we shall bring the meeting to a close.
14 So we'd like to thank everyone for participating
15 today in our public engagement webinar. The
16 transcription of this virtual meeting will be
17 available at our website,
18 www.aphis.usda.gov/APHISVirtualMeetings within
19 three weeks.

20 We will also post a link to a survey
21 there. Please click on it and complete the survey.

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1 That will help us make these meetings better in the
2 future.

3 Keep in mind that you can leave written
4 comments through June 22nd at regulations.gov.
5 Enter APHIS-2015-0036 in the search box.

6 We have two more of these webinars
7 scheduled: May 12th from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. and May
8 20th from 4:00 to 7:00. Both times are Eastern
9 Daylight Time. The webinars will be the same as
10 the one tonight. They vary only by date and time.
11 Those wishing to attend and/or comment at those
12 webinars are encouraged to register, please, at the
13 website I gave you a moment ago,
14 www.aphis.usda.gov/APHISVirtualMeetings.

15 Thanks again for joining us. This
16 concludes tonight's webinar.

17 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
18 went off the record at 9:01 p.m.)
19
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