

VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

GE COTTON & SOYBEANS RESISTANT TO DICAMBA

Conducted by Richard George and Joanne Serrels

Thursday, September 11, 2014

5:00 p.m.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

4700 River Road

Riverdale, Maryland 20737

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Reported by: Karlene Campbell, CCR  
Capital Reporting Company

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

2 MR. GEORGE: My name is Richard George.

3 I'm the communications branch chief at  
4 Biotechnology Regulatory Services or BRS, a part  
5 of APHIS, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection  
6 Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of  
7 Agriculture. Joining me is Joanne Serrels,  
8 environmental protection specialist at BRS.

9 MS. SERRELS: We welcome you to this  
10 virtual meeting being held to receive public  
11 comments on the Monsanto Company's soybean  
12 genetically engineered to be resistant to dicamba  
13 and cotton resistant to dicamba and glufosinate.  
14 We value your input and are pleased that you  
15 joined us today either to make a public comment or  
16 listen to the comments of others.

17 MR. GEORGE: The purpose of this meeting  
18 is to solicit your comments on a draft  
19 Environmental Impact Statement for petitions for  
20 nonregulated status for herbicide resistant,  
21 genetically engineered plants. The draft EIS  
22 focuses on petitions from Monsanto for soybean

1 genetically engineered to be resistant to dicamba  
2 and cotton resistant to dicamba and glufosinate.

3           For more information on these plants, go  
4 to [www.aphis.usda.gov/aphisvirtualmeetings](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphisvirtualmeetings), all  
5 one word. That's  
6 [www.aphis.usda.gov/aphisvirtualmeetings](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphisvirtualmeetings). This  
7 site contains background information and also  
8 links to other documents and Web sites.

9           In the past we have traveled around the  
10 country to conduct meetings where interested  
11 parties can make public comments on our various  
12 regulatory actions. Today we are holding this  
13 online virtual meeting to allow more people the  
14 opportunity to comment.

15           MS. SERRELS: We will be taking only  
16 spoken comments today. If you prefer to make a  
17 written comment instead of a spoken one, you can  
18 do so by going to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) through  
19 September 25. Enter "dicamba" in the search box,  
20 and this will take you to the pages where you can  
21 make your comment.

22           The public comment period ends on

1 September 25. You can go to regulations.gov  
2 anytime up until that date to leave a written  
3 public comment or you can make a spoken comment  
4 here in our meeting, which will go until 8:00 p.m.  
5 Eastern time. Whether spoken or written, your  
6 comment will become part of the public record. A  
7 transcript of your public comment will be posted  
8 to the Web site within the next three weeks.  
9 Today we are here to receive your input only, not  
10 to answer questions about the draft EIS. For  
11 background information, please go to  
12 [www.aphis.usda.gov/aphisvirtualmeetings](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphisvirtualmeetings).

13 MR. GEORGE: If you would like to make a  
14 public comment today, on your telephone keypad,  
15 please press one and then zero. The operator will  
16 then respond to you and let you know when it is  
17 your turn to speak. We ask that you keep your  
18 comments to three minutes or less. We also ask  
19 that when it is your turn to speak, that you  
20 identify yourself, and please say and spell your  
21 name so that our court reporter has a good chance  
22 of spelling it correctly in the transcript.

1 Written transcripts of this meeting will be  
2 available within three weeks at  
3 [www.aphis.usda.gov/aphisvirtualmeetings](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphisvirtualmeetings).

4 MS. SERRELS: The statements received  
5 during the public comment period, whether spoken  
6 today or submitted in writing to [regulations.gov](http://regulations.gov),  
7 will be considered in the development of the final  
8 Environmental Impact Statement associated with the  
9 petitions for nonregulated status from Monsanto  
10 for soybean genetically engineered to be resistant  
11 to dicamba and cotton resistant to dicamba and  
12 glufosinate.

13 APHIS will then carefully consider all  
14 public comments submitted during the comment  
15 period before finalizing the draft EIS and then  
16 making its final decision regarding the regulatory  
17 status of these GE plants. We welcome your  
18 comments today because they will help us ensure  
19 that relevant issues are considered as we prepare  
20 the final Environmental Impact Statement.

21 MR. GEORGE: If you would like to make a  
22 public comment today, again, on your telephone

1 keypad, please press one and then zero. The  
2 operator will then respond and let you know when  
3 it is your turn to speak. With that, we are ready  
4 to -- with that, we are ready to hear from our  
5 first commenter. Do we have someone?

6 MR. MCCLENDON: Yes. This is Larry  
7 McClendon. Am I live?

8 MR. GEORGE: You are live, Larry. If you  
9 would please say and spell your name slowly and  
10 clearly so we can get the spelling right in the  
11 record, please.

12 MR. MCCLENDON: My name is Larry  
13 McClendon, L-A-R-R-Y, M-C-C-L-E-N-D-O-N. I'm a  
14 fourth-generation cotton farmer. I have lived and  
15 farmed in Eastern Arkansas most of my life. And I  
16 grow from five to ten thousand acres of cotton  
17 each year. I grew the dicamba-tolerant cotton  
18 trait under the regulatory review this year on my  
19 farm, approximately 2500 acres.

20 I would like to share my experience  
21 firsthand because not many people, and  
22 particularly farmers have been able to see this.

1 I would also like to say that I fully support the  
2 option to deregulate the dicamba-tolerant cotton  
3 and soybeans. Again, as a farmer, I can say with  
4 a lot of confidence that growers need new weed  
5 management technologies. As weed resistance  
6 becomes more prevalent as it is on my farm, we  
7 need additional tools at our disposal to fight  
8 them. And dicamba tolerance, it works very well.

9 I have significant Palmer pigweed, weed  
10 pressure on my farm. I have the additional mode  
11 of action in dicamba to control it, which is very  
12 important. This system will not only provide an  
13 additional mode of action, but it also expands the  
14 dicamba weed control window from burndown and  
15 planting to in-crop applications.

16 With regards to concerns about off-site  
17 movement, I believe that growers have experience  
18 with various cropping systems and are in a good  
19 position to prevent or minimize drift. We follow  
20 label instructions very closely. We go through  
21 regular training, and we invest in modern  
22 technology that enables to minimize drift.

1           Newer dicamba formulations along with  
2 application requirements that accompany this  
3 system can make it possible for all types of  
4 growers to coexist and prosper. I'm very happy  
5 with the performance of this system on my farm  
6 this year. Again, access to new weed management  
7 tools such as dicamba-tolerant technologies is  
8 important to me as a grower.

9           I would urge USDA to pursue in a timely  
10 fashion towards full deregulation of  
11 dicamba-tolerant technologies. I would like to  
12 thank you today for my comments, my ability to  
13 speak and my -- just considering my thoughts here.  
14 Thank you.

15           MR. GEORGE: Thank you for your comment.

16           We have another commenter ready. Please  
17 go ahead and give us name, spell it, please, and  
18 let us know if you're affiliated with any  
19 organization.

20           MR. SMITH: Steve Smith, S-T-E-V-E,  
21 S-M-I-T-H. I'm affiliated with the Save Our Crops  
22 Coalition. We appreciate -- we appreciate the

1 chance to participate in this meeting today. And  
2 I would like to say that we have submitted written  
3 comments already. But I would like to make these  
4 verbal comments as well.

5           We at Save Our Crops Coalition have grave  
6 concerns about the off-target applications that  
7 will be hitting the entire crop-growing areas,  
8 particularly in the Midwest once this technology  
9 is released, if it is released. Some of the  
10 problems that we found with the EIS that we would  
11 like to have your continued research into would be  
12 that there is no definition of what a nonvolatile  
13 with any metric, nonvolatile dicamba formulation  
14 is.

15           And it just says other than the DMA  
16 formulations, which leads to the belief that it  
17 will be used with DGA formulation. And in no way  
18 do we consider the DGA formulations nonvolatile.  
19 They may be less volatile than the old DMA  
20 formulations, but they are known to be volatile.  
21 And it is backed up by much practical experience  
22 in university research that that's the case.

1           The question will become, what is an  
2 acceptable level of volatility? And we believe  
3 that this level is not acceptable as there will be  
4 crop injury widespread with its use. We also  
5 believe that in the EIS it was felt that due to  
6 the -- that the pricing of the materials would not  
7 be a problem. But due to pricing, we believe that  
8 the least volatile materials might not be the ones  
9 that would be used.

10           In other words, the DMA formulations will  
11 be tempting for growers to use in replacement of  
12 the DGA or the brand of products that Monsanto  
13 might be releasing with. So that any indication  
14 that volatility products will be used at the  
15 minimum, we believe, is not accurate because the  
16 least volatile products will be the more  
17 expensive.

18           We also want to point out that the use of  
19 this product will be primarily later -- our  
20 concerns is primarily use in the later of growing  
21 season once acceptable crops are already leafed  
22 out and that the environmental temperatures are

1 going to be higher, which lead to more volatility.

2           And we also would like for APHIS to  
3 recommend to EPA imposing similar label  
4 restrictions as Dow has voluntarily done with  
5 their new Enlist product. We believe that those  
6 restrictions are reasonable and would add a lot to  
7 the structural safety of the use of this material.

8           Then finally, just as a comment of  
9 something -- we know that USDA and APHIS can  
10 formulate about the actual use of the chemistry  
11 and the safety of it. But we do believe that USDA  
12 and APHIS has a role to play in maintaining good  
13 rural acrimony. And we believe that potential for  
14 all the off-site, off-target movements will lead  
15 to problems among neighbors that sit on -- sit  
16 together on church boards, school boards. And the  
17 prospect of suing your neighbor to recover losses  
18 is not good for rural acrimony.

19           So with that, I appreciate the chance to  
20 speak and look forward to your decisions.

21           MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Steve.

22           The next commenter would like to go,

1 please. Just remember to give us your name and  
2 spell it for us, please.

3 MR. MURPHY: Hi, this is Danny Murphy,  
4 D-A-N-N-Y, M-U-R-P-H-Y. I'm a soybean and corn  
5 farmer from Mississippi. And I would like to  
6 speak in favor of deregulation of dicamba. I  
7 think it is certainly important for industry to  
8 continue to adopt new chemicals and new  
9 technology.

10 Unfortunately, on my farm that I no  
11 longer have -- that I don't have resistant weeds  
12 yet or glyphosate-resistant weeds. But they are  
13 in my county, and I know that they are coming.  
14 And I have been able to reduce having them or not  
15 having them today because I have used multiple  
16 modes of action.

17 And I think this new dicamba technology  
18 would be important in giving me that opportunity  
19 to continue to broaden the base of chemicals I use  
20 and to delay that resistance even further. And I  
21 think it is important that we move forward with  
22 this. As we delay, then it is more likely that I

1 will have resistance in the future. And I would  
2 like to be able to delay that so that it doesn't  
3 inhibit the crops unable to grow or what I'm able  
4 to do.

5 I think that farmers are able to apply  
6 this chemical. I don't think the application  
7 to -- recommendations are -- will be difficult for  
8 farmers to do, I think, if we understand drift and  
9 how to reduce that, how to use the right tips, how  
10 to look at the wind speed. So I think it is a  
11 process that farmers can comply and will comply.  
12 I know that we will need to be careful using this.  
13 But again, I think it is something that we can  
14 easily meet and be able to use this technology.

15 So I think that we do need to move  
16 forward with this deregulation and give farmers an  
17 opportunity to use this technology. I know with  
18 the neighbors that do have resistant weeds, it's  
19 really an opportunity for them to be able to  
20 control those weeds.

21 Again, I thank you for the opportunity to  
22 comment, and I look forward to being able to use

1 this technology in the future. Thank you.

2 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Danny.

3 We are getting notes. So we need to  
4 speak up a little bit here in the room. And we  
5 will try to remember to do that. So I'm hoping  
6 everyone can hear okay. And our next is ready to  
7 comment. So please go ahead.

8 MR. YODER: Yes, thank you. My name is  
9 Fred Yoder, F-R-E-D, Y-O-D-E-R. I'm a  
10 fourth-generation farmer here from Central Ohio.  
11 We raise corn, soybeans and wheat. Been farming  
12 for over 40 years, and I have used dicamba in my  
13 cornfields for over 40 years. I'm well aware of  
14 it, and I know there is a right way and a wrong  
15 way to use these chemicals.

16 We have to avoid drift, and we have to  
17 figure out ways to be cognizant of our nature's  
18 crops. And we have done that. We all have to be  
19 new neighbors. So I'm very excited about the new  
20 formulation that's going to be available to use if  
21 this dicamba-resistant variety gets released. So  
22 I think that's really good.

1 I disagree with one thing one of the  
2 other commenter said. I really see the advantage  
3 of using this particular product in burndowns  
4 because we have learned when we get ready to plant  
5 the crops, we have been using things like 2,4-D  
6 and having to wait a week and then go ahead and  
7 plant the corns or the beans and the -- the  
8 soybeans and the stubble from after a week's worth  
9 of letting it cook.

10 To me, with the different times of the  
11 climate changes that we have experienced and the  
12 weather pattern that we have endured as far as big  
13 rains and dry spells, I think that's the real  
14 advantage of the farmers going to have a chance to  
15 use this new technology.

16 We all have learned in the past that we  
17 can overuse things. The way you bounce back from  
18 a resistance that develops -- and by the way, I  
19 have seen resistant weeds develop for the last 40  
20 years. This is not something new just because we  
21 are talking about glyphosate resistance. There is  
22 lots of other weeds that are resistant to many

1 other chemistries as well. But we have learned  
2 that the way you deal with resistant weeds is  
3 multiple modes of action. That's the way you do  
4 it.

5           We can use other -- we have used other  
6 chemistries like atrazine, which show there is 50  
7 to 60 weeds already resistant too. But by mixing  
8 it with something else, you still get a multiple  
9 mode of action. And that's the way you control  
10 resistance. So this is some of the -- this is a  
11 new product we need to keep ahead of the  
12 resistance of weeds that are developing.

13           Again, I have used dicamba for many, many  
14 years, and I'm excited about the new formulation,  
15 which is much lower in off-target movement with  
16 our new sprayers. And being good stewards, we are  
17 going to have a fine time using this. So I would  
18 greatly appreciate and urge the deregulation of  
19 dicamba-resistant soybeans. I thank you for your  
20 time.

21           MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Fred.

22           And I think we have another commenter

1 ready to speak. If you would, please, go ahead.

2 Is there a commenter ready to speak, please?

3 Prompted if you are.

4 MR. CROMLEY: Yes, I'm ready.

5 MR. GEORGE: Please go ahead.

6 MR. CROMLEY: Thank you. My name is Lee  
7 Cromley, L-E-E, C-R-O-M-L-E-Y. I am a  
8 fifth-generation farmer living in Bulloch County,  
9 Georgia. My brother and I have farmed together  
10 for over 30 years, farming several thousand acres  
11 of cotton and peanuts during that time.

12 In my 30 years or 30 years plus now of  
13 farming, I have seen unbelievable advances in  
14 technology and research in the agricultural  
15 industry. Without these advances, we simply would  
16 not be able to survive the economic and  
17 environmental pressures that we have seen over the  
18 last three decades.

19 Research and technology is what keeps us  
20 going, what keeps us surviving. Because I believe  
21 that dicamba-tolerant crop for the next big  
22 advances in a long line of important technologies,

1 I fully support the option to deregulate  
2 dicamba-tolerant soybeans and cotton without  
3 restriction as recommended by the draft  
4 Environmental Impact Statement. Access to this  
5 and similar technology will help us maintain  
6 healthy yields and ensure stable supply of very  
7 valuable crops just bypass with the consumers  
8 around the world.

9           As a Georgia farmer, I can assure you  
10 that our growers need new weed management  
11 technologies with prudent weed control over a  
12 broad spectrum of weeds, likely Roundup Ready  
13 technologies. As weed resistance becomes more  
14 prevalent on my farm, we have become more and more  
15 limited in our options to effectively fight our  
16 broad spectrum of weeds.

17           Weed science tells us that the best way  
18 to address weed resistance besides good management  
19 practices is using a variety of weed control  
20 tools. The dicamba-tolerant system will provide  
21 an additional mode of action while expanding the  
22 dicamba weed control window that we so desperately

1 need.

2           One other very important point I would  
3 like to discuss relates to our dedication to  
4 sustainability and our desire to reduce our  
5 environmental footprint. I believe that these  
6 technologies will enable growers to continue to be  
7 good stewards of our land. Glyphosate-tolerant  
8 crops have made conservation tillage widely  
9 accepted in Georgia.

10           This has been the greatest advance in  
11 sustainable farming practices since the --  
12 preservation of the topsoil, reduce fuel use and  
13 better water conservation are just a few of the  
14 benefits of conservation tillage. But I have seen  
15 it along the last few decades. That's years. And  
16 I stay away, as a lot of growers should, from  
17 conservation tillage because of the difficulty  
18 controlling weeds. The added dicamba tolerance  
19 will help us better manage weed resistance so we  
20 can continue this very important sustainable  
21 practice.

22           With regards to the concerns about

1 dicamba off-site movement, I believe our growers  
2 are experienced enough with various cropping  
3 systems and are in good position to prevent or  
4 minimize drift. Education has been real strong in  
5 our area. Training is very long. We believe with  
6 those types of things available to us, we will be  
7 able to manage the drifts.

8 Access to new weed management tools such  
9 as dicamba-tolerant technologies is important to  
10 me as a farmer. So I just urge USDA in a timely  
11 fashion to move forward for deregulation of  
12 dicamba-tolerant technologies. I thank you for  
13 your time and considering my comments.

14 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Lee.

15 And we have another commenter ready to  
16 comment. So please go ahead.

17 MS. REED: Hello, can you hear me?

18 MR. GEORGE: Yes, we can. Please go  
19 ahead.

20 MS. REED: Great. Okay. This is Genna  
21 Reed, G-E-N-N-A, R-E-E-D. And I'm here  
22 representing Food and Water Watch, a nonprofit

1 consumer advocacy group that supports safe,  
2 accessible and affordable food for consumers and  
3 fair access to markets for farmers.

4 Food and Water Watch has provided the  
5 USDA our comments on the notice of intent to  
6 prepare an Environmental Impact Statement from  
7 Monsanto's dicamba-tolerant soybean and cotton  
8 varieties last July. In our comments we brought  
9 numerous concerns about the impacts of  
10 dicamba-tolerant crops and the increased use of  
11 dicamba.

12 Most notably are the impact the drift  
13 will have on specialty crop, organic and non-GMO  
14 farms and the unintended environmental impact  
15 associated with more dicamba use. We also  
16 submitted a letter asking the USDA to extend this  
17 comment period, and we hope you will honor that  
18 request.

19 Since then Food and Water Watch with  
20 partnership with Organic Farmers' Agency for  
21 Relationship Marketing, OFARM, conducted a survey  
22 of organic grain producers on preventative

1 measures that they use to avoid GMO contamination  
2 and their financial losses associated with that  
3 contamination.

4           Besides GMO contamination, many of the  
5 responding farmers wrote that they were also  
6 experiencing financial losses associated with  
7 chemical drifts from nearby farms. One farmer  
8 mentioned that a neighbor's spray drift killed 10  
9 acres' worth of feed corn one year. Another  
10 wrote, quote, My only problem comes from drift  
11 when commercial chemical sprayers spray on a windy  
12 day and the spray drifts across the road, a buffer  
13 strip to kill my alfalfa or other crops. I called  
14 the company and complained, but they have never  
15 compensated me for my loss.

16           And regarding dicamba specifically, one  
17 farmer wrote, quote, I'm more concerned with spray  
18 drifts, especially with the effort to release  
19 resistant soybeans. Everyone knows how volatile  
20 that chemical can be, not only to organic farmers,  
21 but all farmers and homeowners, unquote.

22           Even Roundup, considered to be less

1 harmful and less prone to drift than 2,4-D and  
2 dicamba, has been a huge problem for organic  
3 growers. One farmer wrote that, quote, In the  
4 last 16 years, I have had three instances where  
5 spray drift have affected my field. All three  
6 times it was Roundup. It has totaled \$65,000, and  
7 I have had to start the three-year transition  
8 process for organic certification all over.

9 Not only has spray drift negatively  
10 affected relationships between neighbors, but it  
11 has resulted in organic farmers being forced to  
12 take some areas of their farm out of organic  
13 production completely.

14 The USDA's EIS predicts that dicamba use  
15 will increase up to 88 folds and 14 folds for  
16 soybean and cotton respectively compared to  
17 current practice. Without stricter controls over  
18 pesticide use, farmers will become more complacent  
19 with the applications on crop; and farmers with  
20 nearby nontolerant crops will pay the price.

21 I understand that the USDA does not have  
22 authority over pesticide registration and the use,

1 but allowing these crops to become widespread on  
2 agricultural land knowing these implications will  
3 be enabling the irresponsible use of these  
4 chemicals and doing a huge disservice to U.S.  
5 agriculture in the long run.

6           Recently a meta-analysis on 2,4-D and  
7 dicamba done by researchers at Penn State  
8 University found that cotton is extremely  
9 sensitive to dicamba, especially in the flowering  
10 stage. Although dicamba-tolerant soybean and  
11 cotton will not be affected by dicamba,  
12 nontransgenic varieties can be damaged in a number  
13 of ways through off-target movement from ground  
14 spraying, if herbicides is applied in windy  
15 conditions, if dicamba is sprayed in high  
16 temperature condition.

17           Also residues are hard to remove from  
18 farm equipment and could be applied to susceptible  
19 crops unintentionally. And in areas where dicamba  
20 is used abundantly, herbicide residues can  
21 actually accumulate in the air and return to both  
22 transgenic and nontransgenic fields in the form of

1 precipitation.

2           And because dicamba affects broadleaf

3 plants, quote, nontarget exposures may therefore

4 lead to a net reduction in the functional

5 diversity and floral resources provided by

6 seminatural habitats, unquote. This is from a

7 Penn State University study on the effects of

8 dicamba drift on plants and arthropods.

9 Scientists found a decline in forb cover in field

10 edge plots with only 1 percent of the field

11 application rate of dicamba and declines in three

12 insect species: pea aphids, spotted alfalfa aphid

13 and potato leaf hopper.

14           There are clearly gaps in scientific

15 knowledge on the response of wild plants and plant

16 communities to low-dose exposures, especially in

17 realistic field settings. There is incomplete

18 evidence available regarding the direct and the

19 indirect effect of herbicides on arthropods.

20 And this is also from the study: Quote, While

21 most herbicides do not appear to be directly toxic

22 to arthropods, herbicides do affect plant nutrient

1 levels and hormone pathways used in defense, both  
2 of which may influence plant susceptibility to  
3 herbivores.

4 The USDA --

5 MR. GEORGE: If you can finish your  
6 thought, please. And I will mention that we do  
7 have a number of people that are waiting. But if  
8 we reach a point where everyone has spoken and we  
9 have more time, we will invite you to continue and  
10 elaborate on your comment.

11 MS. REED: Okay. This is the last  
12 sentence.

13 MR. GEORGE: Okay.

14 MS. REED: We just hope that the USDA to  
15 do this kind of research on plant and insect  
16 communities and biodiversity in general before  
17 approving this dicamba-tolerant system. So we  
18 urge the USDA to deny approval of Monsanto's  
19 dicamba-tolerant varieties. Thank you.

20 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Genna.

21 And we have another commenter ready to  
22 begin. Please say and spell your name for us, and

1 let's have your comment, please. Hello,  
2 commenter, are you there?

3 MR. TIFFANY: Hello. Okay. This is  
4 Bruce Tiffany, B-R-U-C-E, T-I-F-F-A-N-Y.

5 MR. GEORGE: Go ahead, Bruce.

6 MR. TIFFANY: Okay. I'm a  
7 fourth-generation farmer in the Redwood Falls,  
8 Minnesota, area. I have raised soybeans, corn,  
9 sweet corn, cattle and sheep. I have grown  
10 dicamba-resistant soybeans under permit now for  
11 three years and fully support the deregulation of  
12 this trait. My experience is the weed control  
13 system is effective, economical, safe for the  
14 operator and environmentally responsible.

15 I also believe the technology will be  
16 effective for a long time because we have numerous  
17 corn chemistries available so we can reserve the  
18 dicamba for soybean weed control. All of these  
19 different modes of action will delay any  
20 resistance of the weed population. The need for  
21 another soybean weed control tool is apparent with  
22 increased newly difficult-to-control weeds showing

1 up here.

2 Weed such as tall waterhemp and Venice  
3 mallow can be controlled with dicamba. A lot of  
4 these weeds are small-seated types that flourish  
5 under a reduced tillage system. In an effort to  
6 improve water quality, soil health and reduce fuel  
7 usage, most farmers are reducing their tillage,  
8 thereby setting up a more favorable environment  
9 for these small-seated weeds.

10 Compared to the 1970s and the present, we  
11 have gotten much more efficient at using our  
12 inputs in crop production. Part of the reason is  
13 we have not been wasting labor, fuel, fertility,  
14 water and sunlight on growing weeds. This is good  
15 for the environment and good for the price of  
16 food.

17 However, nature is always evolving and  
18 changing the rules of the game, and using the best  
19 tools and technology available will ensure its  
20 safe and sustainable food system. We also live in  
21 a global society and have a responsibility to use  
22 our resources wisely. I have traveled a fair

1 amount and met and seen people all over the world  
2 that rely on us to provide protein for their diet.

3 I have met buyers of Midwest U.S.

4 soybeans to be used for direct human consumption,  
5 animal feed and fish feed. There are millions of  
6 people that get their dietary protein on the other  
7 side of the world because we do our job correctly  
8 here. If we fail to use all the tools available  
9 to us here and have fewer tons of soybeans on the  
10 market at a price they can afford, then we have  
11 failed to live up to our responsibility. We here  
12 in the U.S. and other developed countries won't  
13 starve. The people in developing countries will  
14 be the ones left with a lower protein diet.

15 I base my management decisions for my  
16 farm not only on the present circumstances, but I  
17 also consider whether the people farming this land  
18 before me and after me would be pleased with my  
19 choices. I believe dicamba-tolerant soybeans are  
20 one tool -- one of those tools they would endorse  
21 because this technology helps us deliver a vital,  
22 sustainable and safe product to the public. Thank

1 you for your time.

2 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Bruce.

3 And we have another commenter ready to  
4 comment. So please go ahead.

5 MR. COWAN: Yes. This is Wade Cowan,  
6 W-A-D-E, C-O-W-A-N, from Brownfield, Texas, where  
7 I farm several crops, including peanuts, cotton,  
8 soybeans, grain, sorghum and vegetables. And I  
9 also represent the American Soybean Association as  
10 first vice president.

11 I was calling in today to support the  
12 deregulation of the dicamba soybeans and the  
13 dicamba glufosinate cotton in that they will both  
14 help us in our operation to do a better job of  
15 keeping the rotation that we have kept on our farm  
16 for over 150 years.

17 As we go into the 21st century here, we  
18 need more and more tools to make sure that we can  
19 farm effectively and economically. On our  
20 operation we have used dicamba since the 1970s and  
21 have been able to do so safely and efficiently on  
22 directed crops and as a burndown right next to

1 crops. So people recognize it's very susceptible.  
2 We have done this and done it with very little,  
3 ever, if any, damage to any off-site crop or  
4 the -- a nontarget crop.

5 As we go forward and as you listen to the  
6 comments, I would also assert that when we have  
7 off-site applications, you do have drift  
8 volatility. Many times in the high plains of West  
9 Texas, those disputes are handled amicably between  
10 the farmer and his neighbor because they  
11 communicate with each other and they know the  
12 problems. And they are quite often handled out of  
13 court.

14 I would just like to encourage you to  
15 deregulate both the dicamba soybeans and the  
16 dicamba glufosinate cotton so that we can have  
17 these extra tools in our toolbox. And as we meet  
18 the needs of consumer not only in the United  
19 States, in the world, that we are able to do it in  
20 a highly efficient and sustainable way and prevent  
21 the spread of weeds that are resistant to  
22 different herbicides.

1 I thank you for listening to my comment,  
2 and I, once again, would hope to deregulate these  
3 two systems.

4 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Wade.

5 And we do have another commenter ready to  
6 comment. Please go ahead.

7 MR. GAESSER: This is Ray Gaesser, R-A-Y,  
8 G-A-E-S-S-E-R. My family and I grow soybeans and  
9 corn in Southwest Iowa. I also am currently  
10 serving as president of the American Soybean  
11 Association and both represent our farm and also  
12 the association.

13 I would really like to speak in support  
14 of deregulation of dicamba-tolerant soybeans and  
15 cotton, you know, as farmers need and should have  
16 choices to address weed-resistant issues. And we  
17 are beginning to see weed-resistant issues on our  
18 farm. So those new traits and these new  
19 technology are important not only to us, but our  
20 fellow soybean farmers around the country. So we  
21 need -- as farmers we need multiple modes of  
22 action, including dicamba-tolerant soybeans and

1 cotton to address those weed-resistant issues.

2           The new formulations of dicamba  
3 substantially reduce volatility. And farmers are  
4 capable and are experienced using dicamba. On our  
5 farm we have used dicamba within our crop --  
6 cropping system for decades and have real personal  
7 experience with that. And with the new  
8 formulations that are out there and the new  
9 technology that we have in our equipment, we are  
10 even more capable of eliminating and reducing  
11 off-target movement.

12           So with that, I would urge USDA to  
13 regulate without restriction both dicamba-tolerant  
14 soybean and dicamba- and glufosinate-tolerant  
15 cotton. And I really thank you for the  
16 opportunity to comment.

17           MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Ray.

18           We have another comment in the queue at  
19 the moment. If you're on the phone and you would  
20 like to make a comment, please press one and then  
21 zero on your touch-tone phone. And we will see  
22 that -- if you would like to make a comment, we

1 will open the phone line for you and be glad to  
2 take your comment.

3           And it looks like we have a commenter.  
4 If you would like to make your comment, please go  
5 ahead.

6           MR. VLIEGER: Yes, this is Howard  
7 Vlieger, H-O-W-A-R-D, V-L-I-E-G-E-R. I farm in  
8 Northwest Iowa, and I am also a crop and livestock  
9 nutrition advisor, working with diverse family  
10 farms all across the United States.

11           I am encouraging the USDA to step back  
12 and take time to further analyze the dicamba  
13 soybean and cotton system as well as the 2,4-D  
14 crops. It is extremely shortsighted on USDA's  
15 part to rely predominantly on the chemical  
16 industry and chemical use for weed control in crop  
17 production. It has not and will not ever be  
18 successful. And if USDA is incapable of  
19 interpreting history that has proven this, they  
20 are unbelievably shortsighted.

21           The 2,4-D and dicamba crops are going to  
22 increase the amount of toxins that we are putting

1 in our environment. USDA has research from their  
2 own USDA ARS research scientists that have already  
3 manifested significant ill effects of  
4 glyphosate-based herbicides in the soil, in the  
5 environment and to crops. And to further add to  
6 this approach of weed control by herbicide is  
7 ill-sighted and shortsighted.

8           There are effective means and mechanisms  
9 of cover and breaking model crop cycles and  
10 implementation of truly advanced natural  
11 biological crop production systems that are vastly  
12 reducing the weed pressure in fields of all types  
13 of all crops. And USDA needs to quit following  
14 the direction and the guidance of the chemical  
15 industry and the genetically engineered industry  
16 in how they are directing the crop production in  
17 our country.

18           We already have significant and growing  
19 levels of glyphosate residue in virtually every  
20 crop that is being produced in our country that is  
21 inflecting significant harm on both livestock and  
22 the human population. USDA needs to be

1 responsible and quit carrying water to the biotech  
2 and chemical industry.

3 Thank you for listening to my comments.

4 And I urge USDA to say no until proper  
5 environmental impact studies have been conducted  
6 on the full adverse effects of this technology.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Howard.

9 We have no another commenter in the  
10 queue. If you are on the phone listening in and  
11 would like to make a comment, please press one and  
12 then zero on your touch-tone phone; and we will  
13 know you want to comment. We will open your line.

14 MS. ISHII-EITEMAN: Hello, am I on?

15 Hello? Hi, this is Marcia Ishii-Eiteman,  
16 M-A-R-C-I-A, I-S-H-I-I - E-I-T-E-M-A-N. I am from  
17 Pesticide Action Network. And I am calling to  
18 express concerns with the dicamba-resistant cotton  
19 and soybean system.

20 As been mentioned previously and is, in  
21 fact, reported in your own USDA's draft  
22 Environmental Impact Statement, the agency, based

1 on industry studies themselves, predict an 88-fold  
2 increase in the use of dicamba compared with  
3 current practice. And we know it is highly  
4 volatile, can drift for miles. Questions of  
5 formulation of new formulations that are intended  
6 to be less volatile aside, we also know from many  
7 years of experience that spray drift as well as  
8 volatilization drift happens and can devastate  
9 vulnerable crops and also affect adjacent  
10 ecosystems and entire landscapes.

11           The other thing that's particularly  
12 important here is that dicamba is 75 times more  
13 toxic to plant life than the glyphosate in  
14 Roundup. And as a result, the -- combining that  
15 with the extensive increase in dicamba use will  
16 create situations that we really have not  
17 experienced before.

18           We recognize and respect farmers who have  
19 been using dicamba over the years, their attempts  
20 to limit off-target movement. We know that best  
21 intentions aside, off-target movement does happen.  
22 Some of it is just inevitable. You have got to

1 call in the sprayer. You have got to make an  
2 appointment. The wind picks up. You know, the  
3 next chance of rescheduling it is just not going  
4 to be very convenient when you're trying to manage  
5 your entire farm. So sprays go ahead with -- even  
6 as wind conditions change.

7           The problem with how very toxic this is  
8 to other plants is that it puts specialty crop  
9 growers at extreme risk. Grapes, tomatoes, beans,  
10 wheat, corn, peanuts, fruit trees and all the  
11 nonresistant corn, cotton and soybeans out there  
12 are extremely sensitive to dicamba. We are very  
13 concerned that this expected surge in dicamba use  
14 and coupled with the drift damage is very likely  
15 to set back farmers' efforts.

16           It can cause -- and we have heard farmers  
17 reporting cases of drift that have wiped out their  
18 crops and are causing some to be on the verge of  
19 abandoning their farms. It would also set back  
20 farmers' efforts to diversify their farm at a time  
21 where with climate change, with increasing  
22 environmental stresses, with droughts and floods,

1 the importance of diversifying farm landscapes is  
2 very high at this point in order to both have a  
3 healthy, environmentally sustainable farm and to  
4 have a diversity of crops. So farmers' efforts to  
5 diversify their farms, introduce perennials that  
6 can help with soil health and erosion and creating  
7 pollinator-friendly habitat, these are all goals  
8 that are increasingly raised up on farmers'  
9 agendas.

10 And as we look toward the future of  
11 really building a sustainable farming system,  
12 these are the kinds of shifts that we are seeing  
13 farmers trying to take and wanting to take to  
14 deregulate and put into the mix the  
15 dicamba-resistant crops right on the heels of --  
16 because it looks like its the 2,4-D resistant  
17 crops come onto the market, is really going to be  
18 a serious setback to these efforts of farmers to  
19 diversify and those farmers who are already  
20 growing crops and trying to make a living, make a  
21 business, keep their communities going with  
22 their -- especially with their fruit and vegetable

1 production.

2           So we would urge USDA to refrain from  
3 deregulating the dicamba-resistant cotton and  
4 soybean seeds. We would rather see USDA take a  
5 proactive position towards prioritize a search in  
6 and extension of less chemical intensive,  
7 integrated weed management practices to support  
8 our commodity growers with those less chemical  
9 intensive, less damaging to a neighboring farmer's  
10 tugi.

11           There is cutting-edge research coming out  
12 of Penn State, out of Ohio State, out of many  
13 places on successful integrated weed management  
14 that does rely on these kinds of chemistries, but  
15 that includes instead Integro cultivation, crop  
16 rotation, cover cropping in combination with soil  
17 building practices and limited tillage, which  
18 really the state-of-the-art science that is coming  
19 out on that now is showing us that limited tillage  
20 systems can actually have both higher  
21 productivity, comparable profits and really  
22 improve soil health and prevent some of these soil

1 erosion problems that have been raised in the past  
2 within -- that are definitely a problem with a  
3 much more aggressive tillage.

4           So there are a number of alternatives.  
5 We do not need to go this way. USDA has a  
6 responsibility and a broader agency mandate to  
7 keep in mind the bigger picture for all of our  
8 farmers and take steps to protect the economic  
9 success and well-being of our specialty crop  
10 growers as well as support the vibrancy and  
11 healthy environment of rural communities.

12           If we lose these farmers, both the  
13 specialty crop growers or even commodity growers  
14 that are trying to diversity their farms, organic  
15 farmers, conventional farmers, if we lose those,  
16 we are just going to see the further economic  
17 erosion and demise of our already stressed rural  
18 communities. And that is something that I am sure  
19 USDA would not want to see and would join us in  
20 really wanting to take steps to protect the -- and  
21 strengthen and rebuild our rural communities  
22 rather than introduce technologies that could

1 really have the opposite effect.

2           So I thank you for your time and  
3 consideration. We really urge USDA to refrain  
4 from deregulating these 2,4-D and  
5 dicamba-resistant crop technologies and to instead  
6 lead double efforts to provide commodity growers  
7 with cutting-edge research and extension of less  
8 chemical intensive, ecological, integrated weed  
9 management practices. Thanks very much.

10           MR. REDICK: I'm counsel to corn and  
11 soybean growers and a former president of the  
12 Council For Agricultural Science and Technology  
13 and a current board member. And it is pretty  
14 clear to me that we need these crops to prevent  
15 weed resistance becoming a real problem. And as  
16 for spray drifts, as an attorney for growers, I  
17 can agree with Wade, who mentioned these are often  
18 resolved amicably.

19           Also it shouldn't deny organic growers  
20 certification to have drifts. And if the  
21 certifier is denying, the problem is with the  
22 certifier and not with the drifts. It should not

1 deny certification of the organic program. I hope  
2 you can hear me. If not, I'm not sure what to do.

3 (Brief pause.)

4 MR. GEORGE: Thomas Redick, are you  
5 there?

6 MR. MILLER: Who did you ask for?

7 MR. GEORGE: Thomas Redick.

8 OPERATOR: Okay. Ladies and gentlemen,  
9 if you want to make a comment, please press one  
10 and then zero. And then you will be placed in the  
11 queue, and we will take you in the queue as we  
12 were doing before. Again, we appreciate your  
13 patience on bearing with us with our technical  
14 difficulties. But again, we are back on the air  
15 and you're on. Okay.

16 MR. GEORGE: We had a commenter who was  
17 in the process of commenting. If that commenter  
18 would like to please continue, I didn't quite get  
19 your name. I think it was either Tom or Don  
20 Redick. He's gone.

21 So is there another person who would like  
22 to comment, please go ahead. And we apologize for

1 the technical problems here. But please go ahead.

2 MR. MILLER: Are we ready to take other  
3 comments or is this just a question-only spot?

4 MR. GEORGE: No. This is the time to  
5 make comments. And if you have a comment to make,  
6 please go ahead.

7 MR. MILLER: Yes, I have a comment.

8 MR. GEORGE: Please go ahead, give us  
9 your name and spell your name, please, and give us  
10 your comment.

11 MR. MILLER: Victor Miller, V-I-C-T-O-R,  
12 M-I-L-L-E-R. And I want to thank you for the  
13 opportunity to express my support for the  
14 deregulation of dicamba-tolerant soybeans and  
15 cotton without restriction as was recommended by  
16 the draft Environmental Impact Statement on  
17 dicamba-tolerant technologies.

18 As I stated, my name is Vic Miller. I  
19 have been growing corn and soybeans in Oelwein,  
20 Iowa, for 41 years. I also have served our U.S.  
21 farmers as past chairman of the U.S. Grains  
22 Council, an organization that develops export

1 markets for U.S. barley, corn, sorghum and their  
2 processed products. This is where I learned  
3 firsthand about the importance of meeting the  
4 growing demand for these products in the global  
5 marketplace.

6           As I have previously commented, the use  
7 of dicamba is not new. It has been used by  
8 farmers for over 40 years in the U.S. and  
9 continues to be effective on major broadleaf  
10 weeds. Over the past ten years, it has been used  
11 very successfully on more than 250 million acres,  
12 including corn, wheat, pasture and rangeland as  
13 well as other cropland. Homeowners, golf courses  
14 and municipal parks are also among the many users.

15           The equipment, the knowledge and the  
16 desire to use the product in a responsible manner  
17 by the agricultural community already exists. My  
18 intention is to leave a safe, wholesome  
19 environment for my children and grandchildren as  
20 they are the most valued things in my life. To  
21 that end, I have upgraded my sprayers to  
22 accommodate this technology, as have most of the

1 agricultural producers in my area.

2           We are also well aware of sensitive  
3 crops, many of which we grow in our community. We  
4 are all licensed and go through rigorous  
5 educational courses yearly to be better stewards  
6 of the land. Growers across the U.S. need more  
7 modes of action to limit the problem of herbicide  
8 resistance. Dicamba tolerance would be a valuable  
9 addition to today's available weed control options  
10 to maximize yield potential.

11           No till and reduced tillage are very  
12 important conservation measures in my operation.  
13 If weed resistance increases without additional  
14 modes of action in new products to control that  
15 resistance, then I will be forced to increase  
16 tillage, which will have a very negative impact on  
17 those conservation measures not only for me, but  
18 for most of my counterparts as well. Without this  
19 technology, I am left with few viable alternatives  
20 to control weeds in my field, resulting in poor  
21 yields, which means I produce less on these acres.

22           This means I get paid less for my crop, I

1 deliver fewer beans to my local elevator; and this  
2 cascade of impact carries on down the line. The  
3 elevator has fewer beans and more weed seeds or  
4 foreign material that end up at the local crush  
5 plants. Those plants have reduced profitability  
6 and so is the bean quality reduced that is made  
7 into animal feed, soybean oil, biodiesel and food  
8 ingredients, just to name a few. And ultimately,  
9 these things either end up used domestically in  
10 many applications or sold to foreign buyers for  
11 their use in the international market.

12 Now, not only has my profitability been  
13 impacted, but very possibly hungry people around  
14 the world will find their livelihood more tenuous.  
15 Having the ability to incorporate dicamba-tolerant  
16 soybeans into my weed management program allows me  
17 to reduce the dependence that I have on ALS and  
18 PPO herbicides. And it would offer a proactive  
19 program for weed resistance management while  
20 preserving the value of glyphosate, a herbicide  
21 that is still very effective on my farm.

22 In closing, restricting the use or

1 denying access to these new technologies would  
2 have a negative effect on U.S. farm operations.  
3 It would reduce weed control capabilities,  
4 increase costs, reduce farm returns, impact the  
5 U.S. producers' ability to meet foreign market  
6 demand and unfortunately reverse conservation  
7 tillage adoption. We all need this technology,  
8 and I urge you to fully deregulate it. And I  
9 thank you for taking these comments.

10 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Victor.

11 And I want to apologize to all for our  
12 technical issues, which we appear to have ironed  
13 out now. There is a major storm that went through  
14 the Washington area here just before 6:00. That  
15 may have had something to do with it. We don't  
16 know. So thank you for your patience.

17 And I'm understanding we have one person  
18 in the queue who would like to make a comment.  
19 So, commenter, please go ahead.

20 MR. BROTEN: Can you hear me? Hello?

21 MR. GEORGE: Yes, we can. Please give us  
22 your name and spell your name and then your

1 comment, please.

2 MR. BROTEN: Okay. My name is Jim

3 Broten, J-I-M, Broten, B, like in boy, R-O-T-E-N.

4 I would like to thank you for the chance to

5 comment today. I am a third-generation farmer up

6 here in North Dakota with my wife Pat and my son.

7 We operate a farm in North Dakota, producing corn,

8 soybeans and wheat as well as barley, canola,

9 feeds, sunflowers, some potatoes and livestock,

10 beef livestock.

11 I have been involved in agriculture all

12 my life and put my first crop in in 1964, and a

13 past chairman of the U.S. Grains Council, past

14 chairman of North Dakota Barley Council, a member

15 of the North Dakota Grain Growers Association,

16 past president of North Dakota Crop Improvement

17 Association and is very active in regional

18 community affairs and the university affairs.

19 I fully support the option to deregulate

20 dicamba-tolerant soybeans and cotton, MON 87708

21 and MON 88701, with all restriction as recommended

22 by the draft Environmental Impact Statement on

1 dicamba-tolerant technologies. I had made  
2 comments previously that supported deregulating  
3 the technologies that are worth repeating it as  
4 USDA considers its final regulatory actions  
5 regarding these technologies because they will  
6 impact my future and that of my friends and family  
7 and state.

8 Weed control issues are as challenging as  
9 they have ever been. Waterhemp, kochia,  
10 lambsquarter and common ragweed continue to  
11 compete with our crops further, water, sun and  
12 yields. If left without effective control, these  
13 weeds could decrease our land value and our farm  
14 yield and our livelihood. To fight these weeds to  
15 protect our yields, we need new tools; and the use  
16 of dicamba in soybeans would provide excellent  
17 additional mode of action to add to our limited  
18 and valuable tool set.

19 Using dicamba and dicamba-tolerant  
20 cropping system can be a proactive measure to use  
21 on my farm. Without weed management tools such as  
22 dicamba-tolerant crop system, weeds will become

1 more difficult to control; and there will be  
2 greater selection for glyphosate resistance and  
3 PPO resistance, one of the other effective  
4 herbicide tools we have. Dicamba, which when used  
5 together with other effective mode of action such  
6 as glyphosate with dicamba-tolerant soybeans will  
7 protect not only glyphosate, but PPO herbicide and  
8 even newer herbicide such as the bleachers for  
9 sure, fells, mesotrione that are commonly used --  
10 which are commonly used in soybean production.

11 We also compete in the global marketplace  
12 for the crops we harvest. If USDA does not  
13 approve or causes further delay in this new tool,  
14 it will financially harm my farming operation and  
15 restrict my ability to compete against growers in  
16 other parts of the world who are able to use these  
17 technologies such as these to control weeds and  
18 protect yield.

19 I urge the USDA to do their part of  
20 approval of dicamba-tolerant crops without delay  
21 or any restrictions as recommended in the draft  
22 Environmental Impact Statement so that U.S.

1 farmers may have access to important new  
2 advancements in farming that allow farmers such as  
3 me and my son and my grandson to have tools we  
4 need to continue fighting weeds, raising  
5 vulnerable crops and be able to pass our operation  
6 onto the fifth and sixth generation.

7 I have a grandson named Brady Fulton, who  
8 is already at three years old actively interested  
9 in farming. His mother said it must be in the  
10 genes because he isn't old enough to understand  
11 farming. And his dad, his granddad just laughed.  
12 We need all the tools that can be made available  
13 to us to continue our farming. Thank you very  
14 much. Submitted by Jim Broten.

15 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Jim.

16 Looking at our list, we have no one who  
17 is in the queue at the moment. I will remind you  
18 to just press one and then zero on your telephone  
19 keypad if you would like to make a comment. We  
20 will see that, and we will open your mike and be  
21 glad to take your comment. If you already  
22 commented and would like to elaborate on your

1 comment, we have time for that. And so we welcome  
2 your extended comment, if you will.

3           So having said that, we are going to take  
4 a short break. You should hear some music. And  
5 we will be coming back on every few minutes just  
6 to check in. And in the meantime, at any time  
7 that anyone would like to make a comment, just hit  
8 one, then zero. We will see that, and we will  
9 take that comment. But thank you for your  
10 patience. We will be back in a few minutes.

11           (Brief pause.)

12           MR. GEORGE: We still have no one in the  
13 queue to comment. So I just wanted to once again  
14 invite anyone who may be on the phone listening in  
15 to please, if you would like to make a comment or  
16 elaborate on a previous comment, you're welcomed  
17 to do so. Press one, then zero on your touch-tone  
18 phone, and we will see that; and we will be able  
19 to receive your comment.

20           So having said that, I don't see any such  
21 commenter in the queue. So we will break away  
22 again. We will come back every few minutes. In

1 the meantime, you can break in at any time and let  
2 us know that you would like to make a comment; and  
3 we will be happy to take that comment. So we will  
4 be back in a few. Thanks so much.

5 (Brief pause.)

6 MR. GEORGE: Okay. We have a commenter  
7 on the line. So, commenter, if you would say your  
8 name, spell your name and go ahead, we will be  
9 glad to take your comment.

10 Apparently, our commenter dropped off.  
11 In that case, we will take another pause. Anyone  
12 listening in who cares to make a comment, press  
13 one, then zero on your telephone keypad. We will  
14 see that and be glad to take your comment.

15 We have a commenter who has just entered  
16 the queue. If you would make your comment,  
17 please.

18 Commenter, are you there, please? Is it  
19 possible that your phone may be on mute?  
20 Commenter, we are not hearing a comment. So we  
21 are not hearing a comment. I'm sorry. If you're  
22 trying to comment, we are not hearing it. Perhaps

1 you hit one, then zero again if we missed it  
2 somehow.

3           There is still no commenter on the queue.

4 So we will take another pause, but we will be  
5 happy to break in at any time. So if you would  
6 like to make a comment, press one, then zero.

7 Thanks so much. We will be back in a few minutes.

8           (Brief pause.)

9           MR. GEORGE: So we seem to have a  
10 commenter on the line. So we are ready to take  
11 your comment. If you would say your name, spell  
12 your name for us, please. Let us know if you're  
13 with a particular group and go ahead and make your  
14 comment, please.

15           MR. PETERSEN: Okay. My name is Kyle  
16 Petersen. I'm a crop farmer from Minnesota.

17           MR. GEORGE: Go ahead, Kyle. Would you  
18 spell your name for us, please, Kyle.

19           MR. PETERSEN: Absolutely. Kyle,  
20 K-Y-L-E, P-E-T-E-R-S-E-N.

21           MR. GEORGE: Thank you. Go ahead.

22           MR. PETERSEN: Okay. My name is Kyle

1 Petersen. I'm 47 years old and have been crop  
2 farming near Murdock, Minnesota, my entire life.  
3 My wife Paula and I have two sons, Brett, age 18;  
4 Hunter, age 15. Crops currently being raised in  
5 our family farming operation consists of sugar  
6 beets, corn, soybeans, sweet corn, peas and  
7 alfalfa.

8 I was asked to join the dicamba advisory  
9 council for the last two years, comprised of  
10 academics, industry growers and commodity  
11 organizations that worked with Monsanto to offer  
12 input on the development and commercialization of  
13 the Roundup Ready Xtend cropping system. I am  
14 calling in today to offer my support for the  
15 option to deregulate dicamba-tolerant soybeans and  
16 cotton, MON 87708 and MON 88701, without  
17 restriction as recommended by the draft  
18 Environmental Impact Statement on dicamba-tolerant  
19 technologies.

20 One of the greatest challenges as a  
21 farmer is with controlling weeds. I know that  
22 growers need weed management technologies with

1 proven control of a broad spectrum of weeds like  
2 the new Xtend technology. As weed resistance  
3 becomes more prevalent, we feel that the arsenal  
4 of tools at our disposal is limited to effectively  
5 prevent and manage weed resistance.

6 Our Minnesota weed control experts tell  
7 us that the best way to address weed resistance  
8 besides good management practices is using a  
9 variety of weed management tools. The  
10 dicamba-tolerant system will provide an additional  
11 mode of action while expanding the dicamba weed  
12 control window from burndown in planting to  
13 in-crop applications.

14 We currently use Roundup Ready sugar  
15 beets but need to add additional modes of action.  
16 The added dicamba tolerance will help us better  
17 manage weed resistance so we can preserve and  
18 maintain the value of our land. Not only that,  
19 but the use of dicamba as part of the Roundup  
20 Ready Xtend crop system will help us preserve the  
21 value of existing pre- and post-emergent  
22 herbicides, which continue to bring significant

1 value. In Minnesota we produce many crops such as  
2 a wide variety of vegetables.

3 With regard to concerns about dicamba  
4 off-site movement, I believe growers have  
5 experience with various cropping systems and are  
6 in a good position to prevent or minimize drift.  
7 We follow label instructions very closely, go  
8 through regular training and invest in modern  
9 technology that enable us to minimize drift.

10 I have personally seen the new dicamba  
11 formulations in field trials, and the potential  
12 for drift and volatility have been significantly  
13 reduced. Newer dicamba formulations along with  
14 best management practices can make it possible for  
15 all types of growers to coexist and prosper.

16 Access to new weed management tools such  
17 as dicamba-tolerant technologies is important to  
18 me as a farmer. I urge USDA to proceed in a  
19 timely fashion toward full deregulation of  
20 dicamba-tolerant technologies. Further delays  
21 will be harmful to U.S. agriculture. Thank you  
22 for reviewing and considering my comments.

1 Respectfully yours, Kyle Petersen.

2 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Kyle.

3 MR. PETERSEN: You're very welcome.

4 MR. GEORGE: As we look at our list,  
5 there is no one else waiting to comment. And so  
6 once again, we will invite anyone on the phone who  
7 would like to comment to please press one, then  
8 zero on your telephone keypad. And we will see  
9 that you would like to comment and be glad to take  
10 your comment.

11 Seeing that there are none at the moment,  
12 we will take a break, pause for a bit. And we  
13 will be checking back in every few minutes. Thank  
14 you all for your patience, and we will see you in  
15 a few minutes. Thanks.

16 (Brief pause.)

17 MR. GEORGE: And we are back. Looking at  
18 our list, we still don't have anyone in our queue  
19 to make a comment. If you would like to make a  
20 comment, again, I invite you to do so by pressing  
21 one, then zero on your touch-tone phone. And we  
22 will pause a second here to see if anyone takes me

1 up on that. And it seems that no one has. We  
2 will take another pause and let you know we will  
3 be here till 8:00 and happy to take any comments  
4 right up until that time.

5           So having said that, I also would invite  
6 those who may have commented already and who might  
7 like to elaborate on their comments, you certainly  
8 have the opportunity to do so. And in particular,  
9 there was a gentleman whose name I think was Don  
10 Braddock or something that sounds like that. We  
11 never quite got it because we lost him. That's  
12 when we had our technical problems. We would  
13 invite you to please let us know that you would  
14 like to finish your comment. We would like for  
15 you to go ahead and take that.

16           So having said that, I don't see any  
17 commenters in the queue. So we will take another  
18 pause, and we will check back in every five  
19 minutes or so. Thanks so much.

20           (Brief pause.)

21           MR. GEORGE: Spell your name, please, and  
22 go ahead with your comment.

1           MR. JONES: Yes. My name is John Jones.  
2 I'm a third-generation farmer who is -- I have  
3 been farming since 1982 on a family farm. We are  
4 in the Lubbock area, which is in the panhandle  
5 area of Texas. I farm approximately 2000 acres of  
6 cotton, 2000 acres of wheat, and we have a  
7 cow-calf operation. We are under limited  
8 irrigation. Mostly I'm a dryland farmer. But we  
9 have limited irrigation, center pivot irrigations.

10           The last three years have been really  
11 rough on us. We pretty much have record drought  
12 for the last three years. But fortunately, this  
13 year we have had more rainfall, and it has really  
14 helped our bottom line.

15           A part of my life is my family, and I am  
16 blessed with a beautiful wife and a beautiful  
17 daughter. She is a senior this year at Texas Tech  
18 University here at Lubbock. Hopefully she will be  
19 graduating in December. And if you all have  
20 college-aged students, you realize what the  
21 tuition has done over the years. So hoping she is  
22 going to finish in December.

1           Thank you all for this opportunity just  
2 to visit with you. I fully support the option to  
3 deregulate dicamba-tolerant soybeans and cotton  
4 without restriction as recommended by the draft  
5 Environmental Impact Statement on dicamba-tolerant  
6 technologies. And I can tell you with confidence  
7 that as a Texas farmer, cotton farmer, that we as  
8 growers need weed management technologies with a  
9 proven efficiency over broad spectrum of weeds  
10 like these two Monsanto products, 87708 and 87701.

11           Particularly this year as weed resistance  
12 has become more prevalent, we just feel like that  
13 we need more in our arsenal of tools that we can  
14 use to effectively prevent and manage our weed  
15 resistance, the weeds that we have. This year  
16 especially with our increased rainfall, we have  
17 already witnessed a rapid increase in herbicide  
18 resistance, Palmer pigweed, careless weed or  
19 pigweed here in West Texas. And weed science tell  
20 us it is the best way to address weed resistance  
21 in addition to good management practices.

22           It is usually a variety and using a

1 variety of -- dicamba-tolerant system, we feel  
2 like we are providing additional mode of action.  
3 While expanding the dicamba, we control window  
4 from burndowns and also planting in minimum crop,  
5 no-till crop applications.

6 Water and soil conservation are the two  
7 most key components for our area for West Texas  
8 farmers. I'm very concerned with the  
9 sustainability of my farm, and I believe that  
10 dicamba-tolerant technologies will enable growers  
11 to continue to be good stewards of the land.  
12 Compared with -- to some weed control programs,  
13 this system may result in few herbicide  
14 applications.

15 Glyphosate-tolerant crops make no tillage  
16 cultivation possible. This has been a tremendous  
17 advance in sustainable farming practices, thanks  
18 to the prevention of erosion, topsoil erosion,  
19 reduced fuel emissions and better water  
20 conservation. The added dicamba tolerance would  
21 help us better manage these resistant weeds so  
22 that we can preserve the value of our land.

1           I know and I realize that some  
2 individuals, some are very concerned about  
3 off-site movement or herbicide drift. And I  
4 believe that growers, that we have the experience  
5 with various cropping systems; and we are in a  
6 good position to prevent and minimize drift. We  
7 do our best. We do follow label instructions very  
8 closely. We participate in regular training, and  
9 we do our best to invest in modern technology.  
10 It's simply just new spray, spray tips,  
11 maintaining our equipment to minimize drift.

12           Newer dicamba formations along with  
13 better management practices can make it possible  
14 for all types of growers to coexist and prosper.  
15 I feel it is very important to let farmers have  
16 access to new weed management tools such as  
17 dicamba-tolerant technology, and I would urge the  
18 USDA to proceed in a timely fashion towards full  
19 deregulation of dicamba-tolerant cotton and  
20 soybeans. And I really do appreciate just the  
21 opportunity to share with you all this evening and  
22 thank you for reviewing and considering my

1 comments. Thank you very much.

2 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, John.

3 So looking at our queue, we have no other  
4 commenters at the moment. So I will invite anyone  
5 who may be listening in who would like to make a  
6 comment to please press one, then zero. Seeing  
7 that none are in the current queue, we will break  
8 away now for a few moments. We will be back in a  
9 few minutes. We will be here until 8:00 Eastern  
10 time. And so we welcome your comments on the  
11 draft EIS for dicamba-tolerant cotton and soybean.  
12 We will be back in a few. Thanks so much.

13 (Brief pause.)

14 MR. GEORGE: Okay. We are back, and we  
15 have no one waiting in line to make a comment on  
16 the draft EIS. However, we invite anyone who is  
17 listening in who might want to make a comment to  
18 do so, though we will remind you that we will be  
19 here till 8:00 Eastern time to take your comment.  
20 So if you would like to make a comment, press one,  
21 then zero on your phone. And we will see that,  
22 and we will invite you to comment at that time.

1           However, not seeing anyone in the queue,  
2 we are going to pause again. We will come back  
3 every four or five minutes or so just to check in  
4 and let you know we are here and that we are ready  
5 to take comments. Thanks so much. See you in a  
6 few minutes.

7           (Brief pause.)

8           MR. GEORGE: And we are back. This is  
9 the public comment meeting on a draft EIS for  
10 dicamba-tolerant cotton and soybeans. Thanks for  
11 being with us. And I would encourage folks to  
12 comment if you care to by pushing one, then zero  
13 on your touch-tone phone. We have no one in the  
14 queue at the moment. I will remind you that we  
15 will be here till 8:00 tonight, which is about 12  
16 or 13 minutes from now. So we encourage you if  
17 you have a comment you would like to make, please  
18 do so.

19           And I don't see anyone in the queue, and  
20 so we will break away. But we keep our eyes on  
21 this computer screen. And so if you press one,  
22 then zero, we will know you want to make a

1 comment. We will come right back on to listen to  
2 that comment. So thanks so much. And we are  
3 going to pause once again, and we will be back in  
4 a few minutes. Thanks.

5 (Brief pause.)

6 MR. GEORGE: And we are back. And it is  
7 about five minutes of 8:00. And I just want to  
8 remind folks if you would like to make a comment,  
9 we are going to be here for five more minutes.  
10 And we would welcome your comments. Just press  
11 one, then zero on your keypad. And we will see  
12 that, and we will open your mike.

13 So being that there is no one there, I  
14 will remind you that if you would like to make a  
15 comment by going to [regulations.gov](http://regulations.gov), you can make  
16 a written comment there through September 25.  
17 Just go to [regulations.gov](http://regulations.gov) and put "dicamba" in  
18 the search box. It will take you to the docket to  
19 make your comment.

20 And seeing that there is no one in the  
21 queue, we are going to break away again. And we  
22 will come back at 8:00 just to say farewell. But

1 if you would like to make a comment, please let us  
2 know. Thanks so much. Back in a few.

3 (Brief pause.)

4 MR. GEORGE: I do have one commenter in  
5 the queue. So commenter, if you would say your  
6 name, spell your name and give us your comment,  
7 please.

8 MR. SMITH: This is Steve Smith. I  
9 commented before. S-T-E-V-E, S-M-I-T-H. I just  
10 wanted to do just a quick follow-up to a couple of  
11 comments that had been made that farmers are good  
12 at minimizing drift. Farmers are good at  
13 minimizing drift if the conditions are right. And  
14 we are very concerned that the cumulative effects  
15 of 130, 140 million acres of dicamba floating  
16 around is going to make that very difficult.

17 And also the comment that quite often  
18 these cases are handled out of court when there is  
19 damage, that may be true. But quite often it is  
20 not good enough if you're the victim of an  
21 off-target movement that wipes out your specialty  
22 crop. So I just wanted to make those follow-up

1 comments from others that were made, and I  
2 appreciate the opportunity. Thank you.

3 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Steve.

4 And if there are other folks who would  
5 like to make a comment, we just have a couple  
6 minutes left. Please let us know by pressing one  
7 and then zero on your telephone keypad. And  
8 seeing none, we shall take a pause and we will be  
9 back at exactly 8:00 to say good night. Be right  
10 back.

11 (Brief pause.)

12 MR. GEORGE: I would like to thank  
13 everyone who participated today in our virtual  
14 meeting. The PowerPoint of this virtual meeting  
15 will be available on our Web site,  
16 [www.aphis.usda.gov/aphisvirtualmeetings](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphisvirtualmeetings) within a  
17 couple of days. We will also post a link to a  
18 survey there. Please click on it and complete the  
19 survey. It will help us make these meetings  
20 better in the future.

21 MS. SERRELS: Please keep in mind that  
22 our public comment period is open until September

1 25. While this is the only virtual public comment  
2 meeting, you can still comment up until that date  
3 at regulations.gov and by entering "dicamba" in  
4 the search box.

5 MR. GEORGE: Thanks again for joining us.  
6 This concludes our virtual public comment meeting.  
7 Thanks everybody.

8 (Whereupon, at 8:00 p.m., the proceedings  
9 were concluded.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

2 I, KARLENE CAMPBELL, the officer before whom  
3 the foregoing meeting was taken, do hereby certify  
4 that the meeting was taken by me in stenotype and  
5 thereafter reduced to typewriting under my  
6 direction; that said meeting is a true record of  
7 the proceedings; that I am neither counsel for,  
8 related to, nor employed by any of the parties to  
9 the action in which this meeting was taken; and  
10 further, that I am not a relative or employee of  
11 any counsel or attorney employed by the parties  
12 hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in  
13 the outcome of this action.



14  
15  
16 \_\_\_\_\_  
KARLENE CAMPBELL  
Notary Public in and for the  
17 State of Maryland

18 My commission expires:  
19 April 10, 2015

20  
21  
22

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<p style="text-align: center;">\$</p> <hr/> <p><b>\$65,000</b> 23:6</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <hr/> <p><b>1</b> 25:10  <b>10</b> 22:8 71:19  <b>11</b> 1:7  <b>12</b> 66:15  <b>13</b> 66:16  <b>130</b> 68:15  <b>14</b> 23:15  <b>140</b> 68:15  <b>15</b> 56:4  <b>150</b> 30:16  <b>16</b> 23:4  <b>18</b> 56:3  <b>1964</b> 49:12  <b>1970s</b> 28:10 30:20  <b>1982</b> 61:3</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <hr/> <p><b>2,4-D</b> 15:5 23:1    24:6 34:13,21    39:16 42:4  <b>2000</b> 61:5,6  <b>2014</b> 1:7  <b>2015</b> 71:19  <b>20737</b> 1:13  <b>21st</b> 30:17  <b>25</b> 3:19 4:1 67:16    70:1  <b>250</b> 45:11  <b>2500</b> 6:19</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <hr/> <p><b>30</b> 17:10,12</p>	<p><b>301</b> 1:14</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <hr/> <p><b>40</b> 14:12,13 15:19    45:8  <b>41</b> 44:20  <b>47</b> 56:1  <b>4700</b> 1:12</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <hr/> <p><b>5:00</b> 1:8  <b>50</b> 16:6</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <hr/> <p><b>6:00</b> 48:14  <b>60</b> 16:7</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <hr/> <p><b>75</b> 37:12</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">8</p> <hr/> <p><b>8:00</b> 4:4 60:3    65:9,19 66:15    67:7,22 69:9    70:8  <b>851-2236</b> 1:14  <b>87701</b> 62:10  <b>87708</b> 49:20 56:16    62:10  <b>88</b> 23:15  <b>88701</b> 49:21 56:16  <b>88-fold</b> 37:1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <hr/> <p><b>abandoning</b> 38:19  <b>ability</b> 8:12 47:15    48:5 51:15  <b>able</b> 6:22 12:14    13:2,3,5,14,19,2</p>	<p>2 17:16 20:7    30:21 31:19    51:16 52:5 53:18  <b>Absolutely</b> 55:19  <b>abundantly</b> 24:20  <b>academics</b> 56:10  <b>acceptable</b>    10:2,3,21  <b>accepted</b> 19:9  <b>access</b> 8:6 18:4    20:8 21:3 48:1    52:1 58:16 64:16  <b>accessible</b> 21:2  <b>accommodate</b>    45:22  <b>accompany</b> 8:2  <b>accumulate</b> 24:21  <b>accurate</b> 10:15  <b>acres</b> 6:16,19    17:10 22:9 45:11    46:21 61:5,6    68:15  <b>acrimony</b> 11:13,18  <b>across</b> 22:12 34:10    46:6  <b>action</b> 7:11,13    12:16 16:3,9    18:21 27:19    32:22 36:17    46:7,14 50:17    51:5 57:11,15    63:2 71:9,13  <b>actions</b> 3:12 50:4  <b>active</b> 49:17  <b>actively</b> 52:8  <b>actual</b> 11:10  <b>actually</b> 24:21    40:20</p>	<p><b>add</b> 11:6 35:5    50:17 57:15  <b>added</b> 19:18 57:16    63:20  <b>addition</b> 46:9    62:21  <b>additional</b>    7:7,10,13 18:21    46:13 50:17    57:10,15 63:2  <b>address</b> 18:18    32:16 33:1 57:7    62:20  <b>adjacent</b> 37:9  <b>adopt</b> 12:8  <b>adoption</b> 48:7  <b>advance</b> 19:10    63:17  <b>advanced</b> 35:10  <b>advancements</b>    52:2  <b>advances</b>    17:13,15,22  <b>advantage</b> 15:2,14  <b>adverse</b> 36:6  <b>advisor</b> 34:9  <b>advisory</b> 56:8  <b>advocacy</b> 21:1  <b>affairs</b> 49:18  <b>affect</b> 25:22 37:9  <b>affected</b> 23:5,10    24:11  <b>affects</b> 25:2  <b>affiliated</b> 8:18,21  <b>afford</b> 29:10  <b>affordable</b> 21:2</p>
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