

# NEPA Pilot Project Overview

BRS Stakeholder Meeting  
December 13, 2011  
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# Overview

- Timeframe – 2 year project
- Voluntary program
  - Petitioner-submitted Environmental Report
  - Contractor funded by Cooperative Agreement for all or part of NEPA process
- No limitation on number of participants



# Goal



- Test new approaches to developing environmental analyses and documents to determine the extent to which these approaches improve the quality, timeliness and cost effectiveness of APHIS/BRS NEPA documents

# What is an Environmental Report ?



- An ER is a technical report that helps the Agency complete a NEPA analysis
  - Describes the subject of the petition and its use in the environment
  - It compares the current agroecosystem with one that includes the use of the GE organism that is the subject of the petition
  - Supported by current scientific data and literature



# Environmental Report



- Purpose and Need for the GE organism
- Action
- Action Area
- Affected Environment
- Alternatives
- Environmental Consequences
- Cumulative Impacts

# Environmental Report

The screenshot displays the USDA APHIS Biotechnology website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About APHIS, Newsroom, Career Opportunities, Help, and Contact Us. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Biotechnology > NEPA Pilot Project > Documents. The main content area is titled "Biotechnology" and "BRS NEPA Pilot Project Documents". It is organized into several sections: "NEPA Pilot Project Process Documents" (including NEPA and Petition Process Presentation, and Cooperative Agreements Workflow Process), "Guidance Documents" (including Environmental Reports Guidance Presentation and Draft Guidance for Preparing Environmental Reports), "Templates/Samples" (including Environmental Report Template and Work and Financial Plan Sample), and "Informational Documents" (including USDA Press Release: National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Pilot Project, NEPA Pilot Project Federal Register Notice, and APHIS Application for the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA Pilot). A sidebar on the left offers search and navigation options, including "Search APHIS", "Browse by Audience", and "Browse by Subject" (with categories like Animal Health, Animal Welfare, Biotechnology, etc.). A "Related Topics" sidebar on the right lists various subjects like Overview, Introducing Genetically Engineered Organisms, and Compliance and Inspection. At the bottom right, there is a "I Want To..." section with links for View Hot Topics, Apply for a Permit, Check the Status of a Permit, Learn about Compliance Assistance, Report a Compliance Issue, Register as a BRS Stakeholder, Learn about BRS, Find Biotechnology Environmental Documents, Submit a Public Comment, Learn about BRS Job Opportunities, and Ask a Question. The page is dated "Last Modified: July 29, 2011".

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/nepa\\_pilot\\_documents.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/nepa_pilot_documents.shtml)

# What is a Cooperative Agreement?

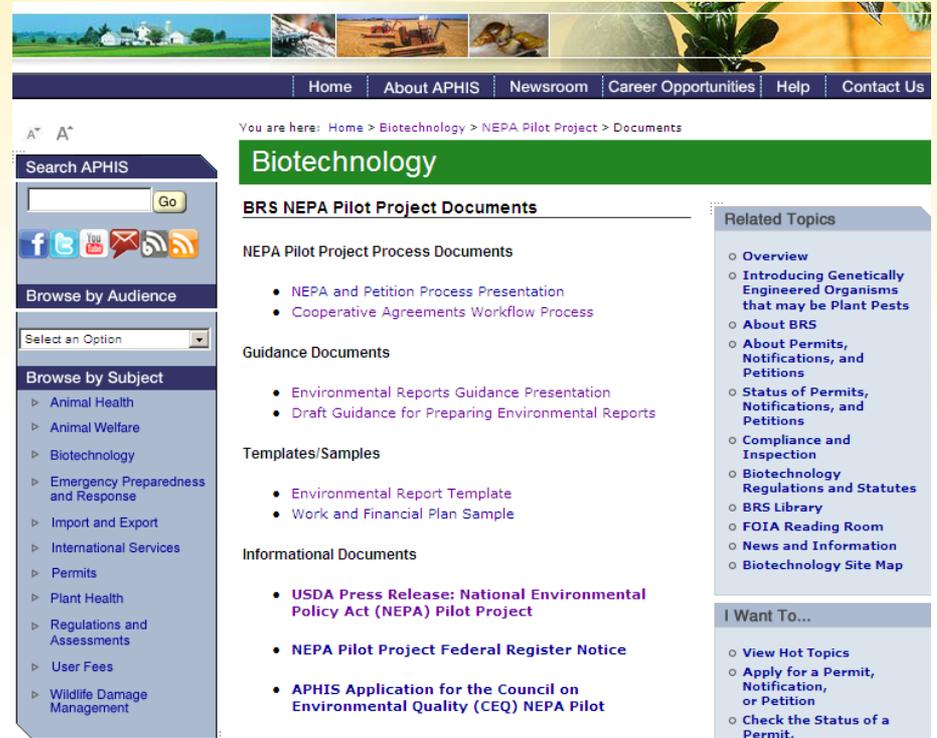


- The Cooperative Agreement describes the responsibilities and deliverables of APHIS and the Cooperator
- Cooperator provides funds to hire an environmental consulting firm



# Cooperative Agreements

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/downloads/nepa\\_pilot/Draft%20process%20for%20WFP%20and%20CA.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/downloads/nepa_pilot/Draft%20process%20for%20WFP%20and%20CA.pdf)



The screenshot shows the APHIS website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About APHIS, Newsroom, Career Opportunities, Help, and Contact Us. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: "You are here: Home > Biotechnology > NEPA Pilot Project > Documents". The main content area is titled "Biotechnology" and "BRS NEPA Pilot Project Documents". It lists several categories of documents:

- NEPA Pilot Project Process Documents**
  - NEPA and Petition Process Presentation
  - Cooperative Agreements Workflow Process
- Guidance Documents**
  - Environmental Reports Guidance Presentation
  - Draft Guidance for Preparing Environmental Reports
- Templates/Samples**
  - Environmental Report Template
  - Work and Financial Plan Sample
- Informational Documents**
  - **USDA Press Release: National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Pilot Project**
  - **NEPA Pilot Project Federal Register Notice**
  - **APHIS Application for the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA Pilot**

On the left side, there is a "Search APHIS" box and a "Browse by Subject" menu with the following options:

- ▶ Animal Health
- ▶ Animal Welfare
- ▶ Biotechnology
- ▶ Emergency Preparedness and Response
- ▶ Import and Export
- ▶ International Services
- ▶ Permits
- ▶ Plant Health
- ▶ Regulations and Assessments
- ▶ User Fees
- ▶ Wildlife Damage Management

On the right side, there are two sidebars: "Related Topics" and "I Want To...".

**Related Topics**

- Overview
- Introducing Genetically Engineered Organisms that may be Plant Pests
- About BRS
- About Permits, Notifications, and Petitions
- Status of Permits, Notifications, and Petitions
- Compliance and Inspection
- Biotechnology Regulations and Statutes
- BRS Library
- FOIA Reading Room
- News and Information
- Biotechnology Site Map

**I Want To...**

- View Hot Topics
- Apply for a Permit, Notification, or Petition
- Check the Status of a Permit, Notification, or Petition
- Learn about Compliance Assistance
- Report a Compliance Issue
- Register as a BRS Stakeholder
- Learn about BRS
- Find Biotechnology Environmental Documents
- Submit a Public Comment
- Learn about BRS Job Opportunities
- Ask a Question

Last Modified: July 29, 2011

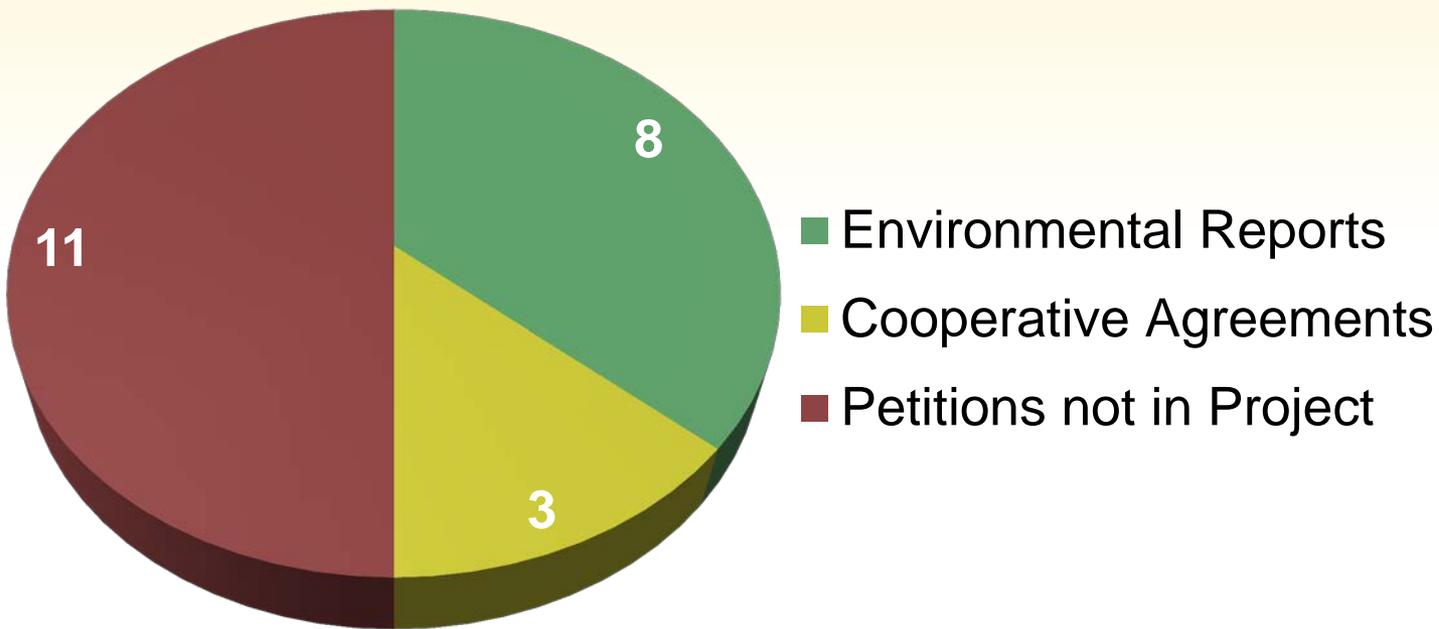
# Participants

	Industry	Academic
Current # of participants	8	1

Interested in participating?

➤ Send in your letter of interest

# Petitions





# Outcomes of Project



- Determine the effect of applicant-prepared ERs for Agency NEPA analysis quality, timeliness, and cost
- Determine the effect of applicant-funded NEPA analyses on agency resources



# Metrics for NEPA Analysis



- Evaluation of phases
  - Draft
  - Response to comments
  - Final
- Employee time
  - Document preparation
  - Document review

# Next Steps

- Series of webinars or calls related to development of ERs
- Revision of guidance, but...we need feedback
- New petition process





# Project Manager



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