

NEPA Pilot Project Quarterly Report – October 2011

Introduction

The NEPA Pilot Project is a 2-year, voluntary project that will evaluate the quality, time, and cost of NEPA analyses and documents associated with petitions for nonregulated status for GE organisms submitted to APHIS. APHIS will independently evaluate environmental reports (ERs) and document the ways in which the report contributed to the final NEPA analysis. APHIS also will document agency resources needed to manage and review contractor-prepared analyses. The agency will compare resources used for contracted analyses to those prepared in-house. As part of this pilot project, APHIS will provide guidance to petitioners who wish to prepare ERs and use feedback from participants to refine the guidance throughout the pilot program.

Accomplishments for Quarter Ending September 30, 2011

- Received letters of interest from 7 entities to participate in the Pilot Project.
- Established project team and appointed a project coordinator to assist NEPA Pilot Team Leader with tracking, implementing, and documenting all aspects of the project.
- Drafted and finalized project charter.
- Offered and completed workshop with Pilot Participants to discuss draft ER guidance document and solicited feedback.
- Identified a modified Activities-Based Costing Model and associated measures that will be used to analyze data and determine values (ex., time and money).

Guidance Updates

None to report.

Next Steps

APHIS is finalizing the development phase of this pilot project. Petitions for evaluation will be identified in November, and data collection will begin by December. To ensure the success of this project in the next quarter, APHIS will contact participants to receive feedback on the environmental report guidance. APHIS also will hold a series of conference calls for participants on topics related to the development of environmental reports. Additional information is forthcoming.