

 **NEWS RELEASE**

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USDA Seeks Public Comment for Environmental Assessment on Genetically Engineered Eucalyptus

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10, 2012—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced that it has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for a proposed controlled field release of a genetically engineered clone of a Eucalyptus hybrid.

On February 21, 2011, APHIS received a permit application from ArborGen, LLC for a controlled field release of genetically engineered Eucalyptus hybrids in six locations across the United States. The purpose of the field release is to assess the effectiveness of gene constructs intended to confer cold tolerance, to test the efficacy of genes introduced to alter lignin biosynthesis, to test the efficacy of genes designed to alter growth, and to test the efficacy of genes designed to alter flowering.

APHIS is making its EA available for public comment. APHIS has prepared its EA to consider the potential environmental effects of a release under permit, consistent with the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act regulations and procedures. This EA has been prepared in order to specifically evaluate the effects on the quality of the human environment that may result from a release under permit of genetically engineered Eucalyptus.

The notice of availability of the EA is published in today's Feb. 10 *Federal Register*.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before March 12. You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2011-0130 to submit or view comments and to view supporting and related materials available electronically.
- Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery: Please send your comment to Docket No. APHIS 2011-0130, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

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