



**Animal and Plant
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News Release

******UPDATED******

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USDA Announces Intent to Prepare Environmental Impact Statements for Genetically Engineered Plants Under Review for Deregulation

WASHINGTON, May 10, 2013 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced the Agency plans to prepare two separate environmental impact statements (EIS) to better inform decision-making regarding the regulatory status of crops genetically engineered (GE) to be resistant to the herbicides known as 2,4 dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D) and Dicamba. APHIS' Notices of Intent to prepare these EIS's published in the Federal Register on May 16. There is a 60-day public comment period for each notice.

These are the first GE plants developed to be resistant to these specific herbicides, which have been approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and have been safely and widely used across the country since the 1960's to control weeds on crop and non-crop sites. If approved, these GE plants would provide farmers the flexibility for new applications of these herbicides, while also offering farmers additional crop planting options.

For the 2,4-D resistant plants (one corn and two soybean varieties), APHIS has previously made available for public review and comment petitions by Dow to deregulate the products, along with draft environmental assessments and plant pest risk assessments for two out of the three products. APHIS received approximately 8,200 comments, including petitions signed by more than 400,000 people in response to these documents.

For the Dicamba-resistant plants (one soybean and one cotton variety), APHIS previously made available for public review and comment petitions by Monsanto to deregulate the products. The comment period on the petition for the cotton variety recently closed on April 29, 2013. APHIS has received more than 500 individual comments and 31,000 form letters regarding these two petitions.

Comments received in response to all of the 2,4-D and Dicamba documents have been similar in scope, ranging from the importance of making additional herbicide-resistant crops available for producers to focusing on the potential increased volume of herbicides

containing 2,4-D and Dicamba and their movement onto non-target crops in surrounding areas, as well as the potential for the development of herbicide-resistant weeds.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, APHIS is required to evaluate the potential environmental impacts that could result from a deregulation of new GE plants by the Agency. If APHIS finds that its potential regulatory decision may significantly affect the quality of the human environment, the Agency must prepare an EIS before making a decision on the proposed Federal action.

With regard to these new herbicide-resistant plants, through its analysis of information submitted by the developers, as well as public comments, APHIS has determined that its regulatory decisions may significantly affect the quality of the human environment. APHIS therefore believes it necessary under NEPA to prepare these two EIS's to further assist the Agency in evaluating any potential environmental impacts before we make a final determination regarding the products' regulatory status.

While the EIS's will look more broadly at potential impacts to the environment as a whole, APHIS' regulatory authority is based on The Plant Protection Act and the Agency's oversight is specific to evaluating the potential for the GE plants to pose a plant pest risk to crops or other plants.

In preparing the EIS's, APHIS plans to host upcoming public meetings that will be publicized through the Federal Register and the Agency's Web site.

Monsanto Herbicide Resistant Soybeans and Cotton

This action was published in the May 16, 2013 Federal Register at

<http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0043-0001>

APHIS is seeking public review and comments on this proposed rule. Consideration will be given to comments received on or before 60 days from the date of publication

You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0043-0001>.

- Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery: Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2013-0043, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Supporting documents and any comments we receive on this docket may be viewed at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0043> or in our reading room, which is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to

4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 799-7039 before coming.

Dow Agro Sciences Herbicide Resistant Corn and Soybeans

This action was published in the May 16, 2013 Federal Register at <http://www.regulations.gov#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0042-0001>

APHIS is seeking public review and comments on this proposed rule. Consideration will be given to comments received on or before 60 days from the date of publication.

You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0042-0001>.
- Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery: Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2013-0042, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Supporting documents and any comments we receive on this docket may be viewed at <http://www.regulations.gov#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0042> or in our reading room, which is located in Room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 799-7039 before coming.

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