

or before December 1, 1997. APHIS received no comments on the subject petition during the designated 60-day comment period.

### Analysis

Event T45 canola has been genetically engineered to contain a *pat* gene derived from *Streptomyces viridochromogenes*. The *pat* gene encodes the enzyme phosphinothricin-N-acetyltransferase (PAT), which confers tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate. Expression of the *pat* gene is controlled by a 35S promoter and terminator derived from the plant pathogen cauliflower mosaic virus. The *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* method was used to transfer the added genes into the parental cultivar *B. napus* var. AC EXCEL.

The subject canola has been considered a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340 because it contains gene sequences derived from plant pathogens. However, evaluation of field data reports from field tests of this canola conducted under APHIS permits since 1996 indicates that there were no deleterious effects on plants, nontarget organisms, or the environment as a result of the environmental release of event T45 canola.

### Determination

Based on its analysis of the data submitted by AgrEvo, and a review of other scientific data and field tests of the subject canola, APHIS has determined that event T45 canola: (1) Exhibits no plant pathogenic properties; (2) is no more likely to become a weed than canola developed by traditional breeding techniques; (3) is unlikely to increase the weediness potential for any other cultivated or wild species with which it can interbreed; (4) will not cause damage to raw or processed agricultural commodities; and (5) will not harm threatened or endangered species or other organisms, such as bees, that are beneficial to agriculture. Therefore, APHIS has concluded that the subject canola and any progeny derived from hybrid crosses with other nontransformed canola varieties will be as safe to grow as canola in traditional breeding programs that are not subject to regulation under 7 CFR part 340.

The effect of this determination is that AgrEvo's event T45 canola is no longer considered a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340. Therefore, the requirements pertaining to regulated articles under those regulations no longer apply to the subject canola of its progeny. However, importation of the subject canola or seeds capable of propagation are still

subject to the restrictions found in APHIS' foreign quarantine notices in 7 CFR part 319.

### National Environmental Policy Act

An environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared to examine the potential environmental impacts associated with this determination. The EA was prepared in accordance with: (1) The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), (2) regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), (3) USDA regulations implementing NEPA (7 CFR part 1b), and (4) APHIS' NEPA Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372). Based on that EA, APHIS has reached a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) with regard to its determination that AgrEvo's event T45 canola and lines developed from it are no longer regulated articles under its regulations in 7 CFR part 340. Copies of the EA and the FONSI are available upon request from the individual listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Done in Washington, DC, this 4th day of January 1998.

**Terry L. Medley,**

*Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-008-1]

#### Public Meeting; Animal Care

**AGENCY:** Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Advance notice of public meeting and request for agenda topics.

**SUMMARY:** The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service plans to hold a public meeting to discuss the animal welfare program and initiatives. This notice solicits suggestions for the agenda for this meeting.

**PLACE, DATES, AND TIME OF MEETING:** The public meeting will be held at the USDA Conference Center, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737, on Tuesday, May 12, 1998. Registration will take place from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and end at approximately 5 p.m.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information on agenda topics

contact Dr. Ron DeHaven, Acting Deputy Administrator, Animal Care, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 84, Riverdale, MD 20737, (301) 734-4981, FAX (301) 734-4328 or 734-4978.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will hold a public meeting in Riverdale, MD, on May 12, 1998, to exchange information with the public about the animal welfare program and initiatives.

The meeting will include a general information session followed by individual workshops on a variety of topics. APHIS is seeking suggestions for meeting topics from the general public, animal researchers, exhibitors, dealers, transporters, and animal protection groups.

Please submit, on or before March 16, 1998, suggestions regarding animal welfare issues of common concern to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Please note that this is not an opportunity to submit formal comments on proposed rules or other regulatory initiatives, but rather is intended to help determine which animal welfare issues and initiatives should be addressed at the public meeting.

After the agenda is finalized, APHIS will announce the schedule in the **Federal Register**.

Done in Washington, DC, this 4th day of February 1998.

**Terry L. Medley,**

*Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Committee of Scientists Meetings

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of meetings.

**SUMMARY:** Meetings of the Committee of Scientists are scheduled for February 24-25, 1998 in Atlanta, Georgia and March 3-5, 1998, in Sacramento, California. The purpose of the Atlanta meeting is to discuss planning issues concerning the National Forests in the Southern Region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virgin Islands, and Virginia). The purpose of the Sacramento meeting is to discuss planning issues concerning the Pacific Southwest Region (California, Hawaii, Guam and Trust Territories of