

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 99-013-1]

Availability of Environmental Assessments and Findings of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that two environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact have been prepared by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service relative to the issuance of permits to allow the field testing of genetically engineered organisms. The environmental assessments provide a basis for our conclusion that the field testing of the genetically engineered organisms will not present a risk of introducing or disseminating a plant pest and will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Based on its findings of no significant impact, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has determined that environmental impact statements need not be prepared.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the environmental assessments and findings of no

significant impact are available for public inspection at USDA, room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing to inspect those documents are requested to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the reading room.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Arnold Foudin, Assistant Director, Scientific Services, PPQ, APHIS, Suite 5B05, 4700 River Road Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737-1237; (301) 734-7710. For copies of the environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact, contact Ms. Linda Lightle at (301) 734-8231; e-mail: Linda.Lightle@usda.gov. Please refer to the permit numbers listed below when ordering documents.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The regulations in 7 CFR part 340 (referred to below as the regulations) regulate the introduction (importation, interstate movement, and release into the environment) of genetically engineered organisms and products that are plant pests or that there is reason to believe are plant pests (regulated articles). A permit must be obtained or a notification acknowledged before a regulated article may be introduced into the United States. The regulations set

forth the permit application requirements and the notification procedures for the importation, interstate movement, and release into the environment of a regulated article.

In the course of reviewing each permit application, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) assessed the impact on the environment that releasing the organisms under the conditions described in the permit applications would have. APHIS has issued permits for the field testing of the organisms listed below after concluding that the organisms will not present a risk of plant pest introduction or dissemination and will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. The environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact, which are based on data submitted by the applicants and on a review of other relevant literature, provide the public with documentation of APHIS' review and analysis of the environmental impacts associated with conducting the field tests.

Environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact have been prepared by APHIS relative to the issuance of permits to allow the field testing of the following genetically engineered organisms:

Permit No.	Permittee	Date issued	Organisms	Field test location
98-274-02r	Monsanto Company	2-03-99	Corn plants genetically engineered to express a novel protein of pharmaceutical interests..	Florida, Texas
98-274-01r	Monsanto Company	2-04-99	Corn plants genetically engineered to express a novel protein of pharmaceutical interests..	Hawaii

The environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact have been 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).

Done in Washington, DC, this 3rd day of March 1999.

Joan M. Arnoldi,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-067-2]

Monsanto Co.; Availability of Determination of Nonregulated Status for Potato Genetically Engineered for Insect and Virus Resistance

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public of our determination that certain potato lines developed by Monsanto Company, which have been genetically engineered for resistance to the Colorado potato beetle and potato virus Y, are no longer considered regulated articles under our regulations governing the introduction of certain genetically engineered

organisms. Our determination is based on our evaluation of data submitted by Monsanto Company in its petition for a determination of nonregulated status, an analysis of other scientific data, and our review of comments received from the public in response to a previous notice announcing our receipt of the Monsanto Company's petition. This notice also announces the availability of our written determination document and its associated environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact.

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 25, 1999.

ADDRESSES: The determination, an environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact, the petition, and all written comments received regarding the petition may be inspected at USDA, room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday,