

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 86, No. 135

Monday, July 19, 2021

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

[Docket ID: USDA–2021–0006]

Identifying Barriers in USDA Programs and Services; Advancing Racial Justice and Equity and Support for Underserved Communities at USDA

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Request for information; extension of comment period.

SUMMARY: We are extending the comment period for our notice seeking input from the public on how the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) can advance racial justice and equity for underserved communities as part of its implementation of Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. This action will allow interested persons additional time to prepare and submit comments.

DATES: The comment period of the request for information published June 16, 2021, at 86 FR 32013, is extended until August 14, 2021. To be assured of consideration, comments must be received on or before August 14, 2021.

ADDRESSES: Comments submitted in response to this notice may be submitted online via the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for the Docket number USDA–2021–0006. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments. All comments received will be posted without change and publicly available on www.regulations.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Elizabeth Archuleta, Director, USDA Office of Intergovernmental & External Affairs, telephone: 202–720–7095, email: EquityRFI@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On June 16, 2021, we published in the **Federal Register** (86 FR 32013, Docket No. USDA–2021–0006) a notice seeking input from the public on how USDA can advance racial justice and equity for underserved communities as part of its implementation of Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.

Comments on the notice were required to be received on or before July 15, 2021. We are extending the comment period on Docket No. USDA–2021–0006 until August 14, 2021. This action will allow interested persons additional time to prepare and submit comments.

Lisa Ramirez,

Director, Office of Partnerships & Public Engagement, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

[FR Doc. 2021–15259 Filed 7–14–21; 4:15 pm]

BILLING CODE 3410–90–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS–2020–0036]

Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Release of *Ramularia crupinae* for Biological Control of Common Crupina (*Crupina vulgaris*) in the Contiguous United States

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that we have prepared a final environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact relative to permitting the release of *Ramularia crupinae* for the biological control of common crupina (*Crupina vulgaris*) in the contiguous United States. Based on our finding of no significant impact, we have determined that an environmental impact statement need not be prepared.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Colin D. Stewart, Assistant Director, Pests, Pathogens, and Biocontrol Permits, Permitting and Compliance Coordination, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road, Unit 133, Riverdale, MD 20737–

1231; (301) 851–2327; email: Colin.Stewart@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is issuing permits for the release of *Ramularia crupinae*, into the contiguous United States for the biological control of common crupina (*Crupina vulgaris*).

Common crupina, a winter annual, is spreading in pastures and rangelands resulting in a reduction in quality of forage as it displaces other species in the northwestern United States; it is a native of Eurasia, most likely originating in the Middle East. Common crupina may grow from 0.3 to 1.0 meter in height, having inconspicuous flowers ranging from lavender to purple, as well as rosettes that develop through the fall and winter.

Ramularia crupinae, a leaf-spotting fungus, was chosen as a potential biological control agent of *Crupina vulgaris* in the contiguous United States over other management options because it is host-specific. On October 30, 2020, we published in the **Federal Register** (85 FR 68838, Docket No. APHIS–2020–0036) a notice¹ in which we announced the availability, for public review and comment, of an environmental assessment (EA) that examined the potential environmental impacts associated with the release of *Ramularia crupinae* for the biological control of common crupina (*Crupina vulgaris*) in the contiguous United States. Comments on the notice were required to be received on or before November 30, 2020. We received one comment by that date. The comment, which did not raise any substantive issues regarding the notice, is addressed in the final EA.

In this document, we are advising the public of our finding of no significant impact (FONSI) regarding the release of *Ramularia crupinae* for the biological control of common crupina (*Crupina vulgaris*) in the contiguous United States. The finding, which is based on the EA, reflects our determination that release of *Ramularia crupinae* for the biological control of common crupina (*Crupina vulgaris*) in the contiguous United States will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Based on this finding, we

¹ To view the notice, supporting documents, and the comment we received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and enter APHIS–2020–0036 in the Search field.

have issued a permit for the release of *Ramularia crupinae* for the biological control of common crupina (*Crupina vulgaris*) in the contiguous United States.

The EA and FONSI may be viewed on the *Regulations.gov* website (see footnote 1). Copies of the EA and FONSI are also available for public inspection at 1620 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. Persons wishing to inspect copies are requested to call ahead on (202) 799-7039 to facilitate entry into the reading room. In addition, copies may be obtained by calling or writing to the individual listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

The EA and FONSI 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 28th day of June 2021.

Mark Davidson,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 2021-15176 Filed 7-16-21; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2020-0072]

Movement of Organisms Modified or Produced Through Genetic Engineering; Notice of Exemptions

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Agriculture (USDA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that we are proposing to exempt plants with additional modifications that could otherwise be achieved through conventional breeding from the regulations that govern the introduction (importation, interstate movement, or release into the environment) of certain organisms modified or produced through genetic engineering. The exempt plants would have distinct modifications on the paternal and maternal alleles of a single gene

resulting from repair of a targeted DNA break; deletions generated using an externally provided repair template; or deletions resulting from repair of two targeted double strand breaks on a chromosome. This action would reduce the regulatory burden for developers of certain plants modified or produced through genetic engineering that are unlikely to pose plant pest risks while enabling the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to focus its regulatory resources on risk analyses of unfamiliar products and those more likely to pose a plant pest risk.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before August 18, 2021.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- **Federal eRulemaking Portal:** Go to www.regulations.gov. Enter APHIS-2020-0072 in the Search field. Select the Documents tab, then select the Comment button in the list of documents.
- **Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:** Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2020-0072, 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 www.regulations.gov or in our reading room, which is located in Room 1620 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Neil Hoffman, Science Advisor, Biotechnology Regulatory Services, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 98, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238; (301) 851-3947.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The regulations in 7 CFR part 340 govern the introduction (importation, interstate movement, or release into the environment) of certain organisms modified or produced through genetic engineering. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) first issued these regulations in 1987 under the authority of the Federal Plant Pest Act of 1957 and the Plant Quarantine Act of 1912, two acts that were subsumed into the Plant Protection Act (PPA, 7 U.S.C. 7701 *et seq.*) in 2000, along with other provisions. Since 1987, APHIS has amended the regulations seven times, in 1988, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1997, 2005, and 2020.

On May 18, 2020, we published in the **Federal Register** (85 FR 29790–29838, Docket No. APHIS-2018-0034) a final rule¹ that marked the first comprehensive revision of the regulations since they were established in 1987. The final rule provided a clear, predictable, and efficient regulatory pathway for innovators, facilitating the development of organisms developed using genetic engineering that are unlikely to pose plant pest risks.

The May 2020 final rule included regulatory exemptions for certain categories of plants that have been modified. Specifically, § 340.1(b) exempted plants that contain a single modification of one of the following types, specified in § 340.1(b)(1) through (3):

- The genetic modification is a change resulting from cellular repair of a targeted DNA break in the absence of an externally provided repair template; or
- The genetic modification is a targeted single base pair substitution; or
- The genetic modification introduces a gene known to occur in the plant's gene pool or makes changes in a targeted sequence to correspond to a known allele of such a gene or to a known structural variation present in the gene pool.

In addition to the modifications listed above, § 340.1(b)(4) provides that the Administrator may propose to exempt plants with additional modifications, based on what could be achieved through conventional breeding. Such proposals may either be APHIS-initiated or may be initiated via a request that is accompanied by adequate supporting information and submitted by another party. In either case, APHIS will publish a notice in the **Federal Register** of the proposal, along with the supporting documentation, and will request public comments. After reviewing the comments, APHIS will publish a subsequent notice in the **Federal Register** announcing its final determination. A list specifying modifications a plant can contain and be exempt pursuant to paragraph (b)(4) is available on the APHIS website at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/biotechnology>.

In this document, we are proposing to add three modifications that plants can contain and be exempt from regulation pursuant to § 340.1. These modifications are similar and functionally equivalent to modifications that commonly occur within conventional breeding and to the

¹ To view the final rule and supporting documents, go to <https://www.regulations.gov>, and enter APHIS-2018-0034 in the Search field.