

chapter I, subchapter E (Viruses, Serums, Toxins, and Analogous Products; Organisms and Vectors). Because we anticipate that applicable provisions of the final version of "Stability Testing of Biotechnological/Biological Veterinary Medicinal Products" may be introduced into APHIS' veterinary biologics regulatory program in the future, we encourage your comments on the draft version.

Authority: 21 U.S.C. 151 *et seq.*

Done in Washington, DC, this 28th day of January 2000.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 00-2379 Filed 2-2-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

National Drought Policy Commission

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Commission public hearing.

SUMMARY: The National Drought Policy Commission (Commission) shall conduct a thorough study and submit a report to the President and Congress on national drought policy. This notice announces a public hearing to be held on February 17-18, 2000, in Billings, Montana, and seeks comments on issues that the Commission should address and recommendations that the Commission should consider as part of its report. The hearing is open to the public.

DATES: The Commission will conduct a public hearing on February 17, 2000, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and February 18, 2000, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Lincoln Center, Auditorium, 415 N 30th Street, Billings, Montana. All times are Mountain Standard Time.

Anyone wishing to make an oral presentation to the Commission at the public hearing, must contact the Executive Director, Leona Dittus, in writing (by letter, fax or internet) no later than COB, February 11, 2000, in order to be included on the agenda. Presenters will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis. The request should identify the name and affiliation of the individual who will make the presentation and an outline of the issues to be addressed. Thirty-five copies of any written presentation material shall be given to the Executive Director by all presenters no later than the time of the

presentation for distribution to the Commission and the interested public. Those wishing to testify, but who are unable to notify the Commission office by February 11, 2000, will be able to sign up as a presenter the day of the hearing, February 17, 2000, between 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. and February 18, 2000, between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. All times are Mountain Standard Time. These presenters will testify on a first-come, first-served basis and comments will be limited based on the time available and the number of presenters. Written statements will be accepted at the public hearing, or may be mailed or faxed to the Commission office.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this public hearing should contact Leona Dittus, on 202-720-3168, Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339, or Internet: leona.dittus@usda.gov, by COB February 11, 2000.

COMMENTS: The public is invited to respond and/or to submit additional comments, concerns, and issues for consideration by the Commission by March 29, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Comments and statements should be sent to Leona Dittus, Executive Director, National Drought Policy Commission, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 6701-S, STOP 0501, Washington, D.C. 20250-0501.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Leona Dittus (202) 720-3168; FAX (202) 720-9688; Internet: leona.dittus@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the Commission is to provide advice and recommendations to the President and Congress on the creation of an integrated, coordinated Federal policy, designed to prepare for and respond to serious drought emergencies. Tasks for the Commission include developing recommendations that will (a) better integrate Federal laws and programs with ongoing State, local, and tribal programs, (b) improve public awareness of the need for drought mitigation, prevention, and response and (c) determine whether all Federal drought preparation and response programs should be consolidated under one existing Federal agency, and, if so, identify the agency.

Below is a draft vision statement and set of principles to guide the Commission. Draft Vision Statement: Our vision is of a well-informed, involved U. S. citizenry and its governments prepared for and capable of lessening the impacts of drought—

consistently and timely—in the new millennium.

This vision is based on the following principles:

Consideration of all affected entities and related issues, including legal, economic, geographic, climate, religious, and cultural differences; fairness and equity; and environmental concerns;

Comprehensive, long-term strategies that emphasize drought planning and measures to reduce the impacts of drought;

Federal role focused on appropriate coordination, technical assistance, education, and incentives while at all times respecting the rights and responsibilities of

Federal, State, and local governments, and tribal sovereignty;

Self-reliance and self-determination;

Lessons learned from past drought experiences;

Shared drought-related expertise and knowledge across international borders.

In addition to your own views and thoughts regarding a national drought policy, as you review the draft vision and guiding principles, the Commission would be interested in your thoughts regarding the following questions:

1. What is the best means for informing the public of Federal assistance for drought planning and mitigation?
2. What type of information do you need for responding to the drought?
3. What needs do you or your organization presently have with respect to addressing drought conditions?
4. What do you see as the Federal role with respect to drought preparedness? Drought response? Should Federal emergency assistance be contingent on advance preparedness?
5. Are there any ways you feel that the Federal Government could better coordinate with State, regional, tribal, and local governments in mitigating or responding to droughts?
6. What lessons have you or your organization learned from past drought experiences that would be beneficial in the creation of a national drought policy?

Signed at Washington, D.C., on January 31, 2000.

George Arredondo,

Acting Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

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