

 **NEWS RELEASE**

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON DEREGULATION OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CORN

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is seeking public comment on a petition to deregulate corn genetically engineered (GE) to produce a microbial enzyme that facilitates ethanol production. APHIS has regulated the corn through its notification and permitting process since 2002.

The petition for deregulation, submitted by Syngenta Seeds, Inc., is in accordance with APHIS' regulations concerning the introduction of GE organisms and products and is available for the public's review and comment. As part of the decisionmaking process, APHIS also has prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA) for review and comment.

Following the comment period, APHIS makes a determination of nonregulated status if it can conclude that the organism does not pose a plant pest risk. If APHIS grants the Syngenta Seeds, Inc., petition for deregulation, the GE corn and its progeny would no longer be regulated articles. The product could then be freely moved and planted without the requirement of permits or other regulatory oversight by APHIS. The scientific evidence indicates that there are unlikely to be any environmental, human health or food safety concerns associated with the GE corn.

APHIS is responsible for protecting U.S. agriculture and the environment from animal and plant pests. APHIS regulates GE products in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In compliance with agency policy, Syngenta Seeds, Inc. submitted a food and feed safety and nutritional assessment summary to FDA for this GE corn. EPA is not involved in evaluating this GE corn because it has not been engineered to produce a pesticide or to be tolerant to an herbicide.

APHIS has safely regulated GE organisms since 1986 and has overseen the deregulation of more than 70 products.

This action was published in the Nov. 19, 2008, *Federal Register*. APHIS is seeking comment on the petition and on the EA.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before Jan. 20, 2009. Send two copies of postal mail or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. APHIS-2007-0016, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit

118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Comments can be submitted on the the Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2007-0016>. Click on “Add Comments” to view public comments and related materials available electronically.

Comments are posted on the Regulations.gov Web site and also can be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call (202) 690-2817.

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