

 **NEWS RELEASE**

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA TO HOST MULTI-AGENCY INFORMATIONAL MEETING CONCERNING COMPLIANCE WITH THE FEDERAL SELECT AGENT PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Nov. 6, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will host a public meeting on Dec. 9 to provide specific regulatory guidance on the Federal Select Agent Program. The program was established under the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 to regulate certain biological agents and toxins. The meeting will be held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the USDA Center at Riverside, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, Md. 20737.

This meeting is an opportunity for interested individuals and entities possessing, using or transferring select agents, to obtain specific regulatory guidance and information on the standards concerning biosafety and biosecurity issues. Security risk assessments, entity registration, biosafety requirements and security measures are among the issues that will be discussed by representatives from APHIS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Attendees must register in advance of the meeting. Registration forms are available online from the National Select Agent Registry's Web site at <http://www.selectagents.gov>; by telephone to (301) 734-5960 or by e-mail to agricultural.select.agent.program@aphis.usda.gov. For those unable to attend in person, the meeting will be available at no cost as a Webcast for a limited number of registrants.

Notice of this public meeting was published in the Nov. 5 *Federal Register*.

Travel directions to the USDA Center at Riverside are available on the Internet at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/general_info/directions_riverdale.shtml. Picture identification is required to gain access to the building. Parking is available next to the building for a \$2.25 fee. The nearest Metro station is the College Park station on the Green Line, which is within walking distance.

For more information or if special accommodations are required, such as a sign language interpreter, contact the agricultural select agent program by telephone at (301) 734-5960 or via e-mail to agricultural.select.agent.program@aphis.usda.gov.

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Note to Reporters: USDA news releases, program announcements and media advisories are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS news release page at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/newsroom/>. Also, anyone with an e-mail address can sign up to receive APHIS press releases automatically. Send an e-mail message to lyris@mdrdlyriss10.aphis.usda.gov and leave the subject blank. In the message, type “subscribe press_releases.”