

 **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, Dec. 11, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) seeks public comment on a petition to deregulate corn genetically engineered (GE) for tolerance to glyphosate herbicides and acetolactate synthase-inhibiting herbicides. APHIS has regulated the corn, designated as line 98140, through its biotechnology notification and permitting process since 2005.

The petition for deregulation, submitted by Pioneer Hi-Bred International, 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 decision-making process, APHIS also has prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA) for review and comment.

Following the comment period, APHIS will make a determination of nonregulated status if it can conclude that the organism does not pose a plant pest risk. If APHIS grants the Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., petition for deregulation, the 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 and has overseen the deregulation of more than 70 GE products. APHIS regulates GE products in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In addition to APHIS review, Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc. has submitted the appropriate documents to both EPA and FDA to address the requirements specific to each agency. EPA requires that all pesticides, including herbicides, be registered prior to distribution or sale, unless exempt from EPA regulation. Residue tolerances for pesticides also are established by EPA and FDA enforces those tolerances. FDA provides a consultation process to ensure that any human and animal feed safety issues are resolved prior to commercial distribution of a GE food.

This notice was published in the Dec. 8, 2008, *Federal Register*. APHIS is seeking comment on the petition and on the environmental assessment.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before Feb. 6, 2009. Send two copies of postal mail or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0094, 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 Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2008-0094>. 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., S.W., Washington, D.C., 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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