

 **NEWS RELEASE**

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA DEREGULATES GENETICALLY ENGINEERED COTTON

WASHINGTON, May 21, 2009--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced that after a thorough review of scientific evidence it will deregulate the genetically engineered (GE) cotton line GHB614. The cotton and its progeny can now be moved freely and planted without the requirement of permits or other regulatory oversight by APHIS.

APHIS deregulated the cotton after concluding that it does not present a plant pest risk. APHIS' determination was based on an analysis of scientific data, comments received from the public and an environmental assessment (EA) and a pest risk assessment.

Bayer CropScience (BCS) submitted a petition to APHIS to deregulate the GHB614 cotton, which is genetically engineered for tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate. APHIS published a notice in the *Federal Register* seeking public comment on BCS' petition and a draft EA on June 18, 2008. The public comment period closed Aug. 18, 2008.

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 addition to APHIS review, BCS 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 are also 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.

APHIS is responsible for protecting U.S. agriculture and the environment from animal and plant pests and has overseen the deregulation of 75 GE products.

This notice is scheduled to be published in the May 22 *Federal Register* and becomes effective upon publication.

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