USDA APHIS Proposed Rule Published in Federal Register — Not Authorized Pending Plant Risk Analysis (NAPPRA) or Q-37

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has published a proposed rule in the Federal Register: "Importation of plants for planting: Establishing a category of plants for planting not authorized for importation pending pest risk analysis" on July 23, 2009 (vol. 74 (140): 36403-36414). This rule is one of several within the section of the Code of Federal Regulations – 7 CFR Part 319, plant quarantine regulation or "Q-37," that APHIS intends to add or modify to increase consistency of the regulations governing plant imports, and to reduce the probability of importing future invaders. This particular rule establishes a new category of plants, "NAPPRA" (not authorized pending pest risk analysis), that are not permitted for import into the U.S. unless a full pest risk analysis is conducted. These species are either new to the U.S., or represent a new country of export/species combination, the former intended to prevent import of plant species with potential to become invasive, and the latter intended to prevent import of plant species from specific countries likely to host pests or pathogens of concern. Any party wishing to import a species on the NAPPRA list would need to make that request of APHIS prior to action. APHIS would then conduct a full pest risk assessment and determine, using scientific evidence, whether the species should be allowed entry into the U.S. or should be prohibited from importation. APHIS has said they have approximately 185 species ready to propose for NAPPRA listing once this rule is established. Any proposed species would be open for public comment for 60 days prior to final inclusion on the NAPPRA list. The NAPPRA list will be available on a Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) web site.

The background information in the Federal Register provides good documentation of the need for greater regulation of imported plants, including the large increase in both the volume and the number of plants and genera being imported into the U.S. from increasing numbers of countries in recent years. For example, 1,000 more plant genera were imported through the Port of Miami in 2006 than in 2004. More information is available in the Federal Register (http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html, search "7 CFR Part 319"). This rule is open for public comment until Oct. 21, 2009. FLEPPC and NAEPPC intend to submit comments and would welcome input from members.

See an important briefing paper recently approved by the U.S. Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC), ***Biofuels: Cultivating Energy, not Invasive Species****, at http://www.invasivespecies.gov/home_documents/BiofuelWhitePaper.pdf*

Presented at the 2009 Joint meeting for the Florida State Horticultural Society (FSHS) and the Soil and Crop Science Society of Florida (SCSSF) held June 7-9, 2009, which included a joint Symposium on *Biofuel Production in the US: Status and Future Prospects*

Cultivating Non-Native Plants in Florida for Biomass Production: HOPE OR HARM?

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The President's comprehensive New Energy for America Plan mandates that the US become energy independent by 2025 by significantly reducing its consumption of foreign oil during the next decade. One of the proposed strategies for achieving this goal is to produce synthetic petroleum ("biofuel") by investing in the production and processing of sustainable feedstocks ("biomass"). An added benefit of transitioning from natural to synthetic petroleum and cellulosic ethanol is that it will address the economic and ecological challenges associated with climate change and sustainability. In response to this initiative, an increasing number of Florida's growers are using traditional agricultural lands for non-native biomass plantings. Unfortunately, Florida has an unenviable record of being the recipient of numerous plant introductions that have escaped cultivation and become invasive. The proposed large scale plantings in Florida of giant reed, *Arundo donax* L. (Poaceae) and jatropha, *Jatropha curcas* L. (Euphorbiaceae) for cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel production, respectively, are of concern because of documented evidence of invasiveness, propagule pressure and the results of recent weed risk assessments. These species are predicted to become invasive in Florida's unique natural systems and should be discouraged as bioenergy crops. Some varieties of jatropha not only are invasive but also are extremely toxic. Additionally, the USDA currently is funding a multi-million dollar biological control program against the invasive giant reed in California and Texas. Species unlikely to become invasive or incur other environmental damage should be selected as bioenergy crops as Florida invests in more sustainable and lower emission fuels.