

demonstrates the safety of the product at levels well above possible maximum exposure levels anticipated via consumption of processed food products produced from VIP3A cotton. Moreover, little to no human dietary exposure to VIP3A protein is expected to occur via VIP3A cotton. Due to the lack of toxicity of the VIP3A protein and its very low potential for allergenicity, dietary exposure is not anticipated to pose any harm for the U.S. population. No special safety provisions are applicable for consumption patterns or for any population sub-groups.

2. *Infants and children.* The plant-incorporated protectant active ingredient, *Bacillus thuringiensis* VIP3A insect control protein and the genetic material necessary for its production in cotton, demonstrates no mammalian toxicity. Thus, there are no threshold effects of concern and, consequently, there is no need to apply an additional margin of safety.

#### *G. Effects on the Immune and Endocrine Systems*

The safety data submitted show no adverse effects in mammals, even at very high dose levels, and support the prediction that the VIP3A protein would be non-toxic to humans. Therefore, no effects on the immune or endocrine systems are predicted. When proteins are toxic, they are known to act via acute mechanisms and at very low dose levels (Ref. 1). Further, the VIP3A protein is derived from a source that is not known to exert an influence on the endocrine system.

#### *H. Existing Tolerances*

There are no existing tolerances for the *Bacillus thuringiensis* VIP3A protein and the genetic material necessary for its production. Other *Bacillus thuringiensis* based pesticide products are exempt from tolerances.

#### *I. International Tolerances*

There are no existing international tolerances or exemptions from tolerance for the *Bacillus thuringiensis* VIP3A protein and the genetic material necessary for its production.

#### *J. Reference*

1. Sjoblad, R. D., J. T. McClintock and R. Engler, (1992) Toxicological Consideration for Protein Components of Biological Pesticide Products. *Regulatory toxicol Pharmacol* 15: 3-9 [FR Doc. 03-14199 Filed 6-5-03; 8:45 am]

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[OA-2003-0005: FRL-7508-7]

### Public Involvement Policy

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Notice of New Public Involvement Policy.

**SUMMARY:** The EPA is issuing its new Public Involvement Policy. The purpose of today's Notice is to advise the public and present the Policy. The new Policy provides guidance to EPA staff on effective and reasonable means to involve the public in EPA's regulatory and program implementation decisions. The core of the Policy is the recommended seven basic steps for effective public involvement, which the Agency should consider when making major decisions on rules, policies and program implementation activities. The Policy is directed internally, but EPA's partners in states, tribes or local governments may also find it to be a useful tool for them.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** How Can I Get Copies of This Document and Other Related Information?

1. *Docket.* EPA has established an official public docket for this action under docket identification (ID) number OA-2003-0005. The official public docket consists of the complete Public Involvement Policy with its appendices and addenda, public comments on the 1981 and draft 2000 Policy, the Agency's Response to Comments and the Framework for Implementing EPA's Public Involvement Policy. The official public docket is the collection of materials that is available for public viewing at the Office of Environmental Information Docket, EPA Docket Center, (EPA/DC) EPA West, Room B102, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC. The EPA Docket Center Public Reading Room is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The telephone number for the Reading Room is (202) 566-1744.

2. *Electronic Access.* You may access this **Federal Register** document electronically through the EPA Internet under the "Federal Register" listings at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/> or use <http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement>

to access the Policy and all its attachments. Electronic versions of items in the public docket are available through EPA's electronic public docket and comment system, EPA Dockets (EDOCKET). You may use EDOCKET at <http://www.epa.gov/edocket/> to access the index listing of the contents of the official public docket and documents that are available electronically. Once in the system, select "search," then key in the appropriate docket ID number. You may still access any of the publicly available docket materials through the EPA Docket Center.

### Background

On January 19, 1981, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published its first Agency-wide Public Participation Policy (46 FR 5736, Jan. 19, 1981). In November 1999, the EPA requested public comment on whether and how to change that Policy, and subsequently began a process to revise the policy and create a plan to implement it across the Agency. In December 2000, EPA released a draft revised Public Involvement Policy for public comment (65 FR 82335, Dec. 28, 2000). The comment period closed on July 31, 2001, following a two-week internet-based dialogue on "Public Involvement in EPA Decisions," which included 1,144 participants from all 50 states.

### Overview of EPA's New Public Involvement Policy

The Policy's core elements are the following seven basic steps for effective public involvement:

1. Plan and budget for public involvement activities.
2. Identify the interested and affected public.
3. Consider providing technical or financial assistance to the public to facilitate involvement.
4. Provide information and outreach to the public.
5. Conduct public consultation and involvement activities.
6. Review and use input, and provide feedback to the public.
7. Evaluate public involvement activities.

This Policy is meant to encourage development of new tools for public involvement and should not limit the degree or types of public involvement already in use at EPA. Agency guidance, which EPA is issuing simultaneously with this Policy, provides specific recommendations for accomplishing each of these seven steps, while also acknowledging the need for EPA officials to use discretion when