

programs, Nondiscrimination, and Price support programs.

For the reasons stated in the preamble, USDA proposes to amend 7 CFR part 15f as follows:

## **PART 15f—ADJUDICATIONS UNDER SECTION 741**

1. The authority citation for part 15f continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 5 U.S.C. 301; section 101(a) of Pub. L. 105–277, 112 Stat. 2681; Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1953 (5 U.S.C. App.).

2. Amend paragraph (c) of § 15f.5 to add a sentence to read as follows:

### **§ 15f.5 How do I request that USDA consider my complaint under these procedures?**

\* \* \* \* \*

(c) \* \* \* If you did not receive a notice form USDA by October 21, 2000, that your Section 741 Complaint Request had been docketed automatically under paragraph (a) of this section, and you did not file a Section 741 Complaint Request prior to October 21, 2000, under paragraph (b) of this section, then any Section 741 Complaint Request received by USDA after October 21, 2000, will not be accepted.

3. Revise § 15f.9 to read as follows:

### **§ 15f.9 What will the Director do to settle my Section 741 Complaint Request when it is received?**

The Director will review each Section 741 Complaint Request. If the Director finds that your complaint is an eligible complaint, the Director will: review all documents and evidence submitted by you; review all agency or CR files, if any exist, regarding the circumstances surrounding the alleged discrimination; review any damage claims; and seek any further clarification, if necessary, from either you or the agency. CR also may refer your eligible complaint for a formal investigation by the CR Program Investigation Division or by an outside contractor. Based on his or her review, the Director will either undertake negotiations with you to resolve the complaint; or inform you that CR will not settle the complaint and explain to you your options, including your right to request formal proceedings before an ALJ under subpart D of this part within 30 days of receipt of notice from the Director that CR will not settle the complaint. If the complaint is successfully resolved or settled, the Director will issue a final determination disposing of the matter. If you have received a notice that the Director will not settle the complaint prior to

February 14, 2003, you have until 90 days after February 14, 2003 to request formal proceedings under subpart D of this part. Any request for formal proceedings received by USDA after the deadlines set forth in this section will not be accepted.

Done at Washington, DC, this 7th day of February, 2003.

**Ann M. Veneman,**

*Secretary of Agriculture.*

[FR Doc. 03–3565 Filed 2–13–03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410–01–M**

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service**

#### **9 CFR Part 82**

[Docket No. 02–117–4]

### **Exotic Newcastle Disease; Additions to Quarantined Area**

**AGENCY:** Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Interim rule and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** We are amending the exotic Newcastle disease regulations by quarantining La Paz and Yuma Counties, AZ, and a portion of Mohave County, AZ, and prohibiting or restricting the movement of birds, poultry, products, and materials that could spread exotic Newcastle disease from the quarantined area. This action is necessary on an emergency basis to prevent the spread of exotic Newcastle disease from the quarantined area.

**DATES:** This interim rule was effective February 10, 2003. We will consider all comments that we receive on or before April 15, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 02–117–4, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737–1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 02–117–4. If you use e-mail, address your comment to [regulations@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:regulations@aphis.usda.gov). Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and “Docket No. 02–117–4” on the subject line.

You may read any comments that we receive on this docket in our reading room. The reading room is located in

room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690–2817 before coming.

APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register**, and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Aida Boghossian, Senior Staff Veterinarian, Emergency Programs Staff, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 41, Riverdale, MD 20737–1231; (301) 734–8073.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **Background**

Exotic Newcastle disease (END) is a contagious and fatal viral disease affecting the respiratory, nervous, and digestive systems of birds and poultry. END is so virulent that many birds and poultry die without showing any clinical signs. A death rate of almost 100 percent can occur in unvaccinated poultry flocks. END can infect and cause death even in vaccinated poultry.

The regulations in “Subpart A—Exotic Newcastle Disease (END)” (9 CFR 82.1 through 82.15, referred to below as the regulations) were established to prevent the spread of END in the United States in the event of an outbreak. In § 82.3, paragraph (a) provides that any area where birds or poultry infected with END are located will be designated as a quarantined area, and that a quarantined area is any geographical area, which may be a premises or all or part of a State, deemed by epidemiological evaluation to be sufficient to contain all birds or poultry known to be infected with or exposed to END. Less than an entire State will be designated as a quarantined area only if the State enforces restrictions on intrastate movements from the quarantined area that are at least as stringent as the regulations. The regulations prohibit or restrict the movement of birds, poultry, products, and materials that could spread END from quarantined areas. Areas quarantined because of END are listed in § 82.3, paragraph (c).

On October 1, 2002, END was confirmed in the State of California. The disease was confirmed in backyard poultry, which are raised on private premises for hobby, exhibition, and