



BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 174

[EPA-HQ-OPP-2017-0113; FRL-9970-43]

***Bacillus thuringiensis* Cry14Ab-1 Protein in or on Soybean; Temporary Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance**

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This regulation establishes a temporary exemption from the requirement of a tolerance for residues of the *Bacillus thuringiensis* Cry14Ab-1 protein in or on soybean, when used as a plant-incorporated protectant (PIP) in soybean plants, in accordance with the terms of Experimental Use Permit (EUP) No. 264-EUP-151. Bayer CropScience LP., submitted a petition to EPA under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA), requesting the temporary tolerance exemption. This regulation eliminates the need under FFDCA to establish a maximum permissible level for residues of Cry14Ab-1 protein. The temporary tolerance exemption expires on April 1, 2020.

DATES: This regulation is effective [*insert date of publication in the Federal Register*].

Objections and requests for hearings must be received on or before [*insert date 60 days after date of publication in the Federal Register*], and must be filed in accordance with the instructions provided in 40 CFR part 178 (see also Unit I.C. of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**).

ADDRESSES: The docket for this action, identified by docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPP-2017-0113, is available at <http://www.regulations.gov> or at the Office of Pesticide Programs Regulatory Public Docket (OPP Docket) in the Environmental Protection Agency

Docket Center (EPA/DC), West William Jefferson Clinton Bldg., Rm. 3334, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001. The 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 Public Reading Room is (202) 566-1744, and the telephone number for the OPP Docket is (703) 305-5805. Please review the visitor instructions and additional information about the docket available at <http://www.epa.gov/dockets>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert McNally, Biopesticides and Pollution Prevention Division (7511P), Office of Pesticide Programs, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001; main telephone number: (703) 305-7090; email address: BPPDFRNotices@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. General Information

A. Does this Action Apply to Me?

You may be potentially affected by this action if you are an agricultural producer, food manufacturer, or pesticide manufacturer. The following list of North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) codes is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather provides a guide to help readers determine whether this document applies to them. Potentially affected entities may include:

- Crop production (NAICS code 111).
- Animal production (NAICS code 112).
- Food manufacturing (NAICS code 311).
- Pesticide manufacturing (NAICS code 32532).

B. How Can I Get Electronic Access to Other Related Information?

You may access a frequently updated electronic version of 40 CFR part 174 through the Government Printing Office's e-CFR site at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?&c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title40/40tab_02.tpl.

C. How Can I File an Objection or Hearing Request?

Under FFDCFA section 408(g), 21 U.S.C. 346a(g), any person may file an objection to any aspect of this regulation and may also request a hearing on those objections. You must file your objection or request a hearing on this regulation in accordance with the instructions provided in 40 CFR part 178. To ensure proper receipt by EPA, you must identify docket ID number EPA-HQ-OPP-2017-0113 in the subject line on the first page of your submission. All objections and requests for a hearing must be in writing, and must be received by the Hearing Clerk on or before *[insert date 60 days after date of publication in the **Federal Register**]*. Addresses for mail and hand delivery of objections and hearing requests are provided in 40 CFR 178.25(b).

In addition to filing an objection or hearing request with the Hearing Clerk as described in 40 CFR part 178, please submit a copy of the filing (excluding any Confidential Business Information (CBI)) for inclusion in the public docket. Information not marked confidential pursuant to 40 CFR part 2 may be disclosed publicly by EPA without prior notice. Submit the non-CBI copy of your objection or hearing request, identified by docket ID number EPA-HQ-OPP-2017-0113, by one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments. Do not submit electronically any information you consider to be CBI or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute.
- *Mail:* OPP Docket, Environmental Protection Agency Docket Center (EPA/DC), (28221T), 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001.

- *Hand Delivery*: To make special arrangements for hand delivery or delivery of boxed information, please follow the instructions at <http://www.epa.gov/dockets/contacts.html>. Additional instructions on commenting or visiting the docket, along with more information about dockets generally, is available at <http://www.epa.gov/dockets>.

II. Background

In the **Federal Register** of June 8, 2017 (82 FR 26641) (FRL-9961-14), EPA issued a document pursuant to FFDCA section 408(d)(3), 21 U.S.C. 346a(d)(3), announcing the filing of a pesticide tolerance petition (PP 6F8541) by Bayer CropScience LP., 2 T.W. Alexander Dr. Research Triangle Park, NC 27709. The petitioner requested that 40 CFR part 180 be amended by establishing a temporary exemption from the requirement of a tolerance for residues of the plant-pesticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* Cry14Ab-1 in or on soybean. That document referenced a summary of the petition prepared by the petitioner Bayer CropScience LP, which is available in the docket via <http://www.regulations.gov>. There were no comments received in response to the Notice of Filing.

EPA is establishing a temporary exemption that varies slightly from the request, as explained in Unit III.C.

III. Final Rule

A. EPA's Safety Determination

Section 408(r) of FFDCA authorizes EPA to establish a temporary exemption from the requirement of a tolerance for residues covered by an experimental use permit issued under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. That section states that the provisions of section 408(c)(2) of FFDCA apply to exemptions issued under FFDCA section 408(r). Section 408(c)(2)(A)(i) of FFDCA allows EPA to establish an exemption from the requirement for a tolerance (the legal limit for a pesticide chemical residue in or on a food) only if EPA determines

that the exemption is “safe.” Section 408(c)(2)(A)(ii) of FFDCA defines “safe” to mean that “there is a reasonable certainty that no harm will result from aggregate exposure to the pesticide chemical residue, including all anticipated dietary exposures and all other exposures for which there is reliable information.” This includes exposure through drinking water and in residential settings but does not include occupational exposure. Pursuant to FFDCA section 408(c)(2)(B), in establishing or maintaining in effect an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance, EPA must take into account the factors set forth in FFDCA section 408(b)(2)(C), which require EPA to give special consideration to exposure of infants and children to the pesticide chemical residue in establishing a tolerance or tolerance exemption and to “ensure that there is a reasonable certainty that no harm will result to infants and children from aggregate exposure to the pesticide chemical residue” Additionally, FFDCA section 408(b)(2)(D) requires that EPA consider “available information concerning the cumulative effects of [a particular pesticide’s] . . . residues and other substances that have a common mechanism of toxicity.”

EPA evaluated the available toxicity and exposure data on *Bacillus thuringiensis* Cry14Ab-1 and considered its validity, completeness, and reliability, as well as the relationship of this information to human risk. In summary, the available data does not indicate any adverse effects due to toxicity or allergenicity of the Cry14Ab-1 protein. A full explanation of the data upon which EPA relied and its risk assessments based on that data can be found within the document entitled “Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA) Considerations for the Plant-Incorporated Protectant Pesticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* Cry14Ab-1.” This document, as well as other relevant information, is available in the docket for this action as described under

ADDRESSES.

There is likely to be exposure to Cry14Ab-1 through consumption of soybean plants containing the pesticide, and there is potential for exposure in drinking water. There is unlikely

to be residential or non-occupational exposure due to incorporation within the plant and the lack of availability at this time of the plant for residential uses.

Although FFDC section 408(b)(2)(C) provides for an additional tenfold margin of safety for infants and children in the case of threshold effects, EPA has determined that there are no such effects due to the lack of toxicity and allergenicity for this PIP. As a result, an additional margin of safety for the protection of infants and children is unnecessary.

Based upon its evaluation, EPA concludes that there is reasonable certainty that no harm will result to the U.S. population, including infants and children, from aggregate exposure to residues of the Cry14Ab-1 protein in or on soybean. This includes all anticipated dietary exposures and all other exposures for which there is reliable information. The Agency has arrived at this conclusion based on the lack of toxicity and allergenicity for the *Bacillus thuringiensis* Cry14Ab-1 protein. Therefore, a temporary exemption is established for residues of this plant-incorporated protectant *Bacillus thuringiensis* Cry14Ab-1 protein in or on soybean.

B. Analytical Enforcement Methodology

An analytical method is not required for enforcement purposes because EPA is establishing a temporary exemption from the requirement of a tolerance without any numerical limitation for which enforcement is unnecessary.

C. Revisions to the Requested Tolerance Exemption

EPA's final rule revises the request from "plant-pesticide" to "plant-incorporated protectant" to align with the Agency's language published in 40 CFR 174.3; adds the term "temporary" to reflect that this exemption is linked to the pending experimental use permit action, and is published in part 174 rather than part 180, since PIP tolerance exemptions are published in part 174.

IV. Statutory and Executive Order Reviews

This action establishes an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance under FFDC section 408(d) in response to a petition submitted to EPA. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has exempted these types of actions from review under Executive Order 12866, entitled "*Regulatory Planning and Review*" (58 FR 51735, October 4, 1993). Because this action has been exempted from review under Executive Order 12866, this action is not subject to Executive Order 13211, entitled "*Actions Concerning Regulations That Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use*" (66 FR 28355, May 22, 2001); Executive Order 13045, entitled "*Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks*" (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997); or Executive Order 13771, entitled "*Reducing Regulations and Controlling Regulatory Costs*" (82 FR 9339, February 3, 2017). This action does not contain any information collections subject to OMB approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*) nor does it require any special considerations under Executive Order 12898, entitled "*Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*" (59 FR 7629, February 16, 1994).

Since tolerances and exemptions that are established on the basis of a petition under FFDC section 408(d), such as the tolerance exemption in this action, do not require the issuance of a proposed rule, the requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) do not apply.

This action directly regulates growers, food processors, food handlers, and food retailers, not States or tribes. As a result, this action does not alter the relationships or distribution of power and responsibilities established by Congress in the preemption provisions of FFDC section 408(n)(4). As such, EPA has determined that this action will not have a substantial direct effect on States or tribal governments, on the relationship between the national government and the States or tribal governments, or on the distribution of power and

responsibilities among the various levels of government or between the Federal Government and Indian tribes. Thus, EPA has determined that Executive Order 13132, entitled “*Federalism*” (64 FR 43255, August 10, 1999), and Executive Order 13175, entitled “*Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*” (65 FR 67249, November 9, 2000), do not apply to this action. In addition, this action does not impose any enforceable duty or contain any unfunded mandate as described under Title II of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) (2 U.S.C. 1501 *et seq.*).

This action does not involve any technical standards that would require EPA’s consideration of voluntary consensus standards pursuant to section 12(d) of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA) (15 U.S.C. 272 note).

V. Congressional Review Act

Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*), EPA will submit a report containing this rule and other required information to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General of the United States prior to publication of the rule in the **Federal Register**. This action is not a “major rule” as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 174

Environmental protection, Administrative practice and procedure, Agricultural commodities, Pesticides and pests, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: November 13, 2017.

Richard P. Keigwin, Jr.,
Director, Office of Pesticide Programs.

Therefore, 40 CFR chapter I is amended as follows:

PART 174--[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for part 174 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 136-136y; 21 U.S.C. 321(q), 346a and 371.

2. Add § 174.538 to subpart W to read as follows:

§ 174.538 *Bacillus thuringiensis* Cry14Ab-1 protein in soybean; temporary exemption from the requirement of a tolerance.

Residues of the protein Cry14Ab-1 in or on soybean are temporarily exempt from the requirement of a tolerance when used as a plant-incorporated protectant in soybean plants in accordance with the terms of Experimental Use Permit No. 264-EUP-151. This temporary exemption from the requirement of a tolerance expires on April 1, 2020.

[FR Doc. 2017-26080 Filed: 12/1/2017 8:45 am; Publication Date: 12/4/2017]