

GLYPHOSATE-TOLERANT ALFAFLFA

WHEREAS, On December 16th, 2010, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack has announced the Availability of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Glyphosate-Tolerant (GT) Alfalfa; and,

WHEREAS, APHIS In total, considered three alternatives in the final EIS: One, to maintain Roundup Ready (RR) alfalfa's status as a regulated article, Two, to deregulate RR alfalfa; or Three, to deregulate RR alfalfa with geographic restrictions and isolation distances for the production of Roundup Ready alfalfa; and,

WHEREAS, the agency will choose one of these options after the 30 days public review; and,

WHEREAS, about one third of our food supply depends upon pollination; and,

WHEREAS, a healthy bee industry is necessary to maintain an adequate number of managed bee colonies to furnish adequate pollination for crops and for plants in the environment; and,

WHEREAS, even though much research is being done to determine causes of colony health problems, much has yet to be learned to know how to cope with some of the new bee health problems; and,

WHEREAS, an adequate source of flowering plants is beneficial to maintaining healthy bees; and,

WHEREAS, common and conventional alfalfa is grown by farmers in many states, and those farmers allow a significant amount of the common alfalfa to mature, to bloom and produce seed, providing nectar and pollen forage for honey bee colonies in the area, and,

WHEREAS, if Genetically Engineered (GE) alfalfa (the first perennial plant to be considered for release into the environment) could be planted near common alfalfa fields, the genetically engineered genes would spread into the plantings of common alfalfa and production of common alfalfa seed would be adversely affected by the presence of Glyphosate-Tolerant (GT) alfalfa genes, and the GT alfalfa genes would spread uncontrollably year after year thereafter; and,

WHEREAS, all of the responsibility for whatever liability that there may be as a result of introducing these GE alfalfa plants into the environment, is placed directly upon grower, instead of the company selling the seed; and,

WHEREAS, if one large company is permitted to gain “monopolistic control” of alfalfa seed, many farmers will lose the option of growing alfalfa for hay and/or seed production so the beekeeping industry will then suffer loss of alfalfa acreage that may be left to bloom and loss of “goodwill” of the land owners and neighbors of land-owners where the bees are located; now,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED; that the ABF go on record in favor of approval of option number One, to maintain Glyphosate-Tolerant alfalfa’s status as a regulated article; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the ABF express strong opposition to option number Two, to deregulate GT alfalfa and strong opposition to option number Three, to deregulate GT alfalfa with geographic restrictions and isolation distances for the production of GT alfalfa by filing appropriate comments with USDA-APHIS before January 16th, 2011; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the ABF encourage its individual members and other beekeepers also to file comments with APHIS which are in support of this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ABF monitor the development of additional genetically engineered crops, assess their potential hazards to pollinators and the environment, and cooperate with other groups and organizations in pursuit of the aims of reducing the perils of genetically engineered crops and their attendant management practices for pollinators and the resources upon which pollinators depend.