

USDA invites public comment on petition to approve GMO chestnut tree

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is inviting public comment on a petition from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) seeking deregulation of an American chestnut variety developed using genetic engineering for fungal resistance to chestnut blight. The petition will be available for public review and comment for 60 days.

Editor's note: According to [the petition](#),

To our knowledge this is the first petition for a bioengineered organism with the goal of ecological restoration, and represents a unique application for this technology to be potentially used for environmental and cultural benefits outside agriculture. This petition requests that the bioengineered Darling 58 event of American chestnut (and its offspring) be granted nonregulated status by APHIS because it does not pose a plant pest risk as compared to its isogenic controls or traditionally bred chestnuts. Therefore, it should no longer be considered a regulated article....

APHIS is interested in receiving comments regarding potential environmental and interrelated economic impacts to assist in our assessment of the petition as it relates to the National Environmental Policy Act. APHIS will thoroughly review and consider all public input submitted during the comment period, and use the information to develop the appropriate environmental documents and our regulatory determination.

[Read the original post](#)