

Peer Review Plan

Title of Review: White Paper: Perspective on Creeping Bentgrass, *Agrostis stolonifera* L. [] **Influential Scientific Information**

Agency: USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service [X] **Highly Influential Scientific Assessment**

Agency Contact: Office of Science, USDA-APHIS-BRS, 4700 River Road, Unit 98, Riverdale, MD 20737 USA, 301-734-7324, fax 301-734-6352, biotechquery@aphis.usda.gov

Subject of Review: *Agrostis stolonifera* (creeping bentgrass) is the most utilized species for golf courses in temperate regions worldwide. A strain has been genetically engineered to be tolerant to glyphosate, to control *Poa annua* (annual bluegrass) on golf courses. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has been petitioned to grant non-regulated status to this strain. Creeping bentgrass is a wind-pollinated outcrossing perennial which is widespread in managed and natural environments, and reproduces vegetatively by stolons and by tiny seeds dispersed by wind as well as water and animals. It hybridizes in the United States with at least a dozen relatively common species of *Agrostis* (bentgrass) and *Polypogon* (rabbitsfoot-grass) and other species elsewhere. Creeping bentgrass and several of the hybridizing species here and elsewhere also are sometimes weedy or invasive.

As part of the petition-review process, a December 2003 version of “Perspective on Creeping Bentgrass, *Agrostis stolonifera*” (“Perspective”) comprised most of the APHIS-Biotechnology Regulatory Services’ (BRS) preliminary risk assessment on this strain. The preliminary risk assessment is posted on the APHIS-BRS website and has been referenced in several Federal Register notices. The “Perspective” has been used by the Weed Science Society of America and the Environmental Protection Agency in influential publications, and played a fundamental part in the decision by APHIS-BRS to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act to assess potential impacts from granting the petition.

Purpose of Review: This peer review will help to ensure that relevant knowledge of the biology of *Agrostis stolonifera* is sufficiently characterized and understood. Such information is integral to determining some dimensions of the EIS, and to parts already being drafted. Therefore, it is important to conduct the OMB-type peer review now. In the future, a final version of the “Perspective” document may be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal and undergo that organization’s usual peer review process.

The “Perspective” document is informing the EIS for the creeping bentgrass petition. The petition is considered highly influential in that the subject is novel, controversial, and precedent-setting with interagency interest. It may have considerable financial implications. There was no general overview of the biology of the species prior to this document.

Location of Final Revised Document The latest version of the **White Paper: Perspective on Creeping Bentgrass, *Agrostis stolonifera* L.** is available by clicking [HERE](#)