



CHESTNUT CHAT – Q & A
CHAT #13: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
DATE: 09/04/2020

QUESTION	ASKER NAME	ANSWER(S)
you're right Sara. my hand is down	Mike Aucott	live answered
Can you get Jimmy Carter to comment	Anonymous Attendee	":F8:F29) We can certainly ask him. As you know, President Carter is an Honorary Director of TACF and has been an incredible advocate for our mission. I keep in touch with his staff frequently and we ask involvement of him on very rare occasions, considering his age and other causes he's involved in. But great question and timely, as I am in touch with his ""handler"" as of this week to explore if he would be interested in commenting. Lisa"
Will the stop gmo groups sue if USDA approves how long will this delay	Anonymous Attendee	Live answered
Would you anticipate a change in administration having an impact on timing or prospects for approval?	Scott Laseter	live answered
How many transgenic Chestnut trees are available for use in the breeding program, once approval is granted.	Jack Morris	"Suggestion about public comment: I recommend you type your comment into an outside word processing application such as MS Word. Once you have reviewed and checked it over, then cut and paste it into the Federal Register comment website window. good suggestion- many thanks As Andy outlined, there will be two "tracks" for distribution. A small number of trees will be available for horticultural/home/demonstration plantings. For diversification, pollen will be used for outcrossing to wild-type trees and expanding the population base before large-scale restoration.



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Is the OxO gene product present in the root exudates, and if so, is there any potential to change the soil microbiome if used to repopulated forests?	Stephen Parris	live answered Thank you!
what is the budget for the total regulatory approval process and where are those funds coming from? thanks.	Robbie	Thanks for the question, Robbie. Between ESF and TACF, we have shared the cost of James' counsel (before he was able to approve us for pro-bono work at his firm...a huge gift), frequent travel to DC for meetings with the regulators, travel to give presentations and meet with collaborators. I wlld guess might be \$50-75,000 and some of that cost has come from private philanthropy. Thanks for the question! Lisa
"How many successive generations were screened for inheritance stability in regards to OxO?	John Lawson	live answered
With the exception of the SUNY site, what other field sites have been planted and observed long-term?	John Lawson	live answered
Is it clear that USDA will require an EIS? Might they just themselves complete an Environmental Assessment?	Mike Aucott	live answered
You said exemption from registration with EPA is possible. Have you applied for this exemption? How long will it take to get approval from EPA if exemption is not granted?	David	live answered



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Is there value in addressing misinformation or negative comments from opponents when they come in?	Mary Mangan	live answered
Have you coordinated with APHIS on what information needs to be included in the Petition?	Edward M Buchak	live answered
To James, which is more effective? A defensive comment (refuting criticisms) or a positive comment (addressing the advantages of approval)?	Kim Steiner	live answered
Quite a few of the comments against deregulating the transgenic chestnut say we don't need it because the hybrid chestnuts (with Chinese chestnuts genes) is all we need to restore the species. Should this be addressed in response comments? How is USDA likely to perceive this critique of the transgenic chestnut?	Tom Klak	live answered
Can I submit on behalf of a group of individuals, for instance who co-sign a letter of support?	Phillip Hannam	live answered
Is it helpful to submit non-expert comments (i.e., not scientific or economic), but more cultural/sentimental?	Eric Massant	live answered



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Who are the opponents of our petition and what are their concerns?	mark m	live answered
If this is turned down, is there an appeal process	Warren Laws	live answered
Are there questions APHIS is not asking, that we should raise?	Ryan	live answered
Is it helpful to write to my congressman and senators supporting the Petition?	Edward M Buchak	Sure Thing!
How many years could litigation extend the approval of transgenic trees? If we are looking at 2-5 years, how many more would be having to tack onto that? Also, is it possible to utilize faster growing techniques (from Merkle and UGA... maybe?) to expedite the 12-20 years or 25 years total for reintroduction?	Jacob Pease	live answered Awesome. Thank you Andy!
What are the main points against approving this proposal? So, is edibility of the nuts safety not a significant factor?	Eric Massant	live answered
Did we address the idea that because backcrossing seems to be promising, there is no reason to introduce Darling 58?	Edward M Buchak	live answered



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<p>I'm curious why the OxO gene would potentially be regulated as a pesticide given that its function seems to be to prevent a fungal toxin from killing the tree, rather than killing the fungus directly? Or am I misunderstanding some aspect of the function of the gene?</p>	Derek Dohler	live answered
<p>Has ACF consulted organizations of indigenous peoples along the east coast?</p>	John Lawson	live answered
<p>Will future transgenic varieties that express OXO (for example, transgenic trees made via CRISPR or trees with a specific promoter) require a separate application and approval?</p>	Kent Wilcox	Live Answered
<p>Are you tracking the negative comments so that we can rebut them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of things needed to be countered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is a Trojan horse for commercial purpose - This will outcompete "native" trees • - We don't need since the backcross program is succeeding. 	Brian McClain	Live answered



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<p>"Those opposed often ask “why risk transgenic when the backcross method is working for blight resistance?”</p> <p>Don't we have to be more frank that genomics has shown that the Burnham method of backcross does not work for blight resistance."</p>	Doug McLane	live answered
<p>Jared, when you say “backcross chestnuts” are you referring to B3F3 trees, or those with higher percentage of Chinese genes?</p>	Doug McLane	Hi Doug - both. But we are started w/ B3F3 and other more advanced generations first.
<p>are other plants possessing this gene widespread in the East?</p>	Nick & Lillian	Yes. The gene specifically came from wheat but exists in several other plants. I believe there is more info on the ESF website.