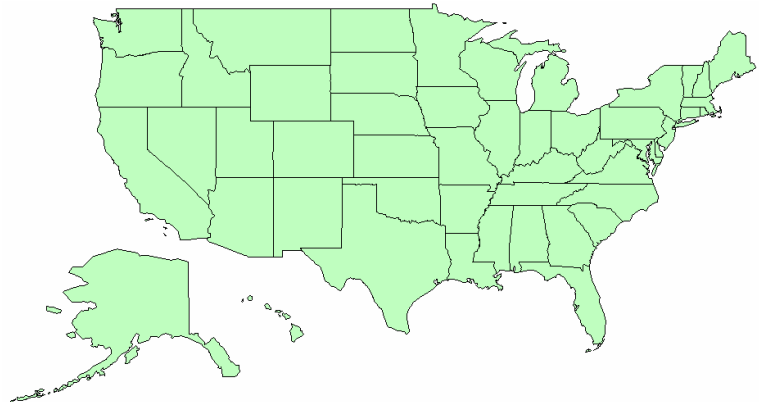

Standards for Plant Health Emergency Management Systems

December 2003



**United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Plant Protection and Quarantine
Pest Detection and Management Programs**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....3

A. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS.....4

B. WRITTEN AGREEMENTS5

C. AUTHORITIES AND POLICIES.....6

D. PLANT PEST SURVEY, CONTAINMENT, CONTROL AND ERADICATION.....7

E. COMMUNICATION8

F. TRAINING AND EDUCATION9

G. FUNDING AND RESOURCES10

STANDARDS FOR STATE PLANT HEALTH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
.....11

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assist State and Federal plant health officials and emergency managers, at the State level, to determine their needs in order to mount a successful response to a plant health emergency. This includes effectively preparing for, identifying and responding to, mitigating against, and recovering from, new plant pests and diseases that could adversely affect the health and wellbeing of the nation's agriculture and natural resources. These standards provide the general public, plant production industries, and trading partners with the confidence that the United States is prepared to respond and recover successfully from a plant health emergency.

In addition to providing an overall plan for a sound emergency response system, the standards also present an opportunity to strengthen the emergency response system in four specific areas:

- 1) Federal-State-Industry partnership and coordination;
- 2) Incident Command System;
- 3) Contingency Plan Documentation; and,
- 4) Human Resources Availability.

The standards described here, partially adopted from collaborative efforts between USDA-APHIS-Veterinary Services (VS) and the animal industry*, address seven components of effective response to a plant health emergency:

- A. Emergency Management Plans
- B. Written Agreements
- C. Authorities and Policies
- D. Surveillance
- E. Communication
- F. Training and Education
- G. Funding

Under each topic, a brief introduction is provided, followed by a list of suggested standards. It is understood that changes will be needed as the national emergency response system continues to improve. USDA/APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) looks forward to working with all cooperators and interested parties in making this plant health emergency management system as effective as possible.

* Standards for State Animal Health Emergency Management Systems. 2000. The National Animal Health Emergency Management System (NAHEMS), www.usaha.org/NAHEMS/standards.pdf

A. Emergency Management Plans

The key partnership in developing each plan is between the State Plant Regulatory Officials (SPRO) and USDA-APHIS-PPQ State Plant Health Directors (SPHD). Other important groups involved in developing and carrying out the plan are: the State's emergency management officials; industry organizations; and the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES). The plan should include all four phases of emergency management: prevention; preparation; response; and, recovery – with the emphasis on response and recovery.

State emergency management officials should be asked to help write the plan. The plan should include protocols, along with roles and responsibilities for dealing with both plant health emergencies and with plant health issues caused by natural disasters. Agricultural organizations and other related or potentially impacted business or industries in the State should have the opportunity to have input into the development of the plan. Once the plan is developed, there should be a procedure for testing, evaluating, and updating the plan regularly through the use of exercises. Another important way to add to the quality of your State plan is to review similar plans developed by adjacent states.

Emergency Management Plan Standards

1. **Every State should have a plan for responding to *plant health* emergencies, especially the initial local response, as a written part of the State emergency management plan. The plan should include information detailing the following:**
 - a. **Plant health surveillance and detection systems;**
 - b. **Initial control and eradication procedures (should include both State and Federal resources, as well as other available resources within the State);**
 - c. **Level of involvement of State and Federal emergency management officials responding to a plant health emergency;**
 - d. **Collaboration between the emergency response within the State and APHIS-PPQ;**
 - e. **Communication among key partners (State, Federal, local, and industry) in an emergency (*Standard Emergency Communication*); and,**
 - f. **Level of involvement of State and Federal plant health officials responding to natural disasters.**
2. **The plan should list all participants and their roles and responsibilities.**
3. **The plan should be periodically evaluated to:**
 - a. **Review risks based on current information;**
 - b. **Compare implementation results with the planned actions after key plant health incidents; and,**
 - c. **Compare test exercise outcomes with planned roles, responsibilities and actions.**

B. Written Agreements

It is important to have written agreements that describe the roles and responsibilities of each participant in the plan. The individual States should determine the precise form of the written agreements.

Written Agreement Standards

There should be agreements that detail the roles and responsibilities of:

1. **Plant health officials - SPRO, SPHD, and their respective staffs - for handling the initial local response to a plant health emergency;**
2. **Plant health officials and State emergency management officials in responding to a plant health emergency (emergency management officials should coordinate with the signatory agencies of the State emergency management plan, including for example the State Environmental Protection Agency, State Department of Transportation, State National Guard, and State Police); and,**
3. **States that support one another in preparing for and responding to plant health emergencies.**
 - a. **Each State should be a part of at least one group of States that support one another in the event of a plant health emergency.**
 - b. **Each State could be a part of more than one group. (For example, New Mexico is part of the Mexican border group and is also part of the group of States that adjoin Texas.)**

C. Authorities and Policies

Most States have the basic authorities that are necessary for local emergency management systems. These include quarantine authority, control and eradication authority, the ability to authorize other than State personnel to issue quarantines and hold orders, and a policy for working on plant health issues associated with natural disasters. Exercises can be used to determine the strength and validity of existing or proposed authorities. If there are conflicting authorities, (for example, eradication authority exists but certain methods violate environmental regulations) those issues should be resolved. Table-top exercises, where all participating parties discuss procedures, roles and responsibilities, are good mechanisms for sorting out and addressing these concerns.

Authorities and Policies Standards

- 1. Clarify, and seek if necessary, quarantine authority for all plant pest species important to the economy of your State. This should include quarantine authority for all exotic plant pests and diseases (defined at a minimum as those on the Select Pests list). This would include the ability to designate areas in the State that are considered to be: a) infected or infested; b) free of the pest; and, c) the buffer between infected/infested and pest-free zones.**
- 2. Authorize appropriate officials, other than State personnel, to issue emergency quarantine and restrict the movement of regulated articles so they can be implemented quickly.**
- 3. Develop a policy for working on plant health issues that may result from natural or man-made disasters.**
- 4. Clarify and seek authorities for the survey, control and eradication of the plant pest or disease, including having access to private properties and removing infested/infected plants or trees, if necessary.**
 - a. Ensure that all plant species important in your State are included.**
 - b. Clearly describe the lines of authority for carrying out control and eradication activities.**
 - c. At a minimum, seek authority for responding to pests and diseases identified on the Select Pests list.**
 - d. Clarify authorities (and lines of authority) for handling emerging pests and diseases.**
 - e. Develop contingency plans for dealing with the possible lack of authority, or limited authorities.**
- 5. Discuss jurisdiction issues with Tribal Councils for quarantine, control, and eradication activities on Tribal land.**
- 6. Identify local authorities regarding environmental issues and jurisdiction.**

D. Plant Pest Survey, Containment, Control and Eradication

To respond quickly to a plant pest emergency, it is crucial to have a surveillance system that provides adequate early information about plant pests and other plant health issues. Technology such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) should be used where beneficial to the overall surveillance program. PPQ should work with other cooperators to provide the capability to manage, control, or eradicate selected plant pests of regulatory significance before these pests become established in the State. PPQ should also provide technical expertise, when appropriate, to program cooperators involved in pest control.

Plant Pest Survey, Containment, Control, and Eradication Standards

- 1. Become familiar with, and practice processing random samples through, at least one of the five National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN) laboratories designated to identify new plant pests.**
- 2. Conduct detection surveys for exotic plant pests of significance.**
- 3. Conduct investigations on newly detected plant pests.**
- 4. Communicate and coordinate activities with appropriate local, State, and Federal agencies, academia, industry, and other appropriate organizations as related to program responsibilities.**
- 5. Confirm pest identification, or provide specimens to appropriate taxonomic authority for identification.**
- 6. Inform the public of new plant pest detections or threats, once verified by the appropriate specialist or authority.**
- 7. Coordinate communication of new plant pest information with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine (USDA-APHIS-PPQ), other appropriate State and Federal agencies, state academic institutions, and industries.**
- 8. Promulgate, implement, and maintain appropriate State quarantines.**
- 9. Coordinate activities with USDA-APHIS-PPQ on cooperative programs.**
- 10. Review and coordinate control activities to ensure compliance with local, State, and Federal laws.**

E. Communication

Communication is an important part of an emergency management system. As the system is tested, and then used in responding to actual emergencies, the reliance on effective communication will become even more apparent to all those involved.

Communication Standards

1. Identify all important contacts:
 - a. Staffs of State and Federal plant health and emergency management officials;
 - b. Exotic plant pest and disease diagnosticians;
 - c. Universities (CSREES' diagnostic laboratories);
 - d. Stakeholders and other interested parties;
 - e. Media personnel and contacts;
 - f. Industry; and,
 - g. Others.
2. Develop a plan that ensures adequate communication among participants (notification/communication tree), supports all aspects of plant health emergency management, and keeps the public informed. *(This can be part of the State emergency management plan or a separate document.)*
3. Develop a plan that ensures availability of necessary communication equipment and systems (phones, cell phones, radios, computers, two-way radios, hand held units, video, etc.)

F. Training and Education

People who respond to emergencies need to keep their skills aligned with the latest technology and procedures. Training and practical exercises are two ways to keep skills current. Exercises provide practice and help in identifying areas where more training is needed. Training can then be targeted to those skills that need to be sharpened. Also, people who provide support in ways other than being direct participants of the plan (*for example, ensuring adequate funding, reporting on unusual disease situations etc.*) need training. Some who have very limited but important roles may need only to be reminded of their roles and briefed on the consequences of providing or failing to provide adequate support.

Training and Education Standards

1. **Develop an awareness and education program to:**
 - a. **Ensure that all State and Federal field operations staff understand their roles in detecting, reporting, and controlling foreign plant pests and diseases;**
 - b. **Ensure that State and Federal support staffs are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and understand why they are important;**
 - c. **Ensure that producers, crop consultants, and county agents are aware of their roles in reporting unusual plant pest and disease conditions of possible foreign origin, or any other significant plant health situation;**
 - d. **Increase the awareness of affected industries regarding their roles in helping to ensure that adequate financial resources are available, and in planning for and responding to emergencies;**
 - e. **Ensure that lab staffs and diagnosticians are aware of potential emergencies involving exotic plant pests and diseases, mechanisms for reporting their detection, and biosecurity measures that should be taken at the laboratories;**
 - f. **Inform affected industries, such as trade and tourism, of the possible impacts that could result from a plant health emergency; and,**
 - g. **Provide training and continually updated information to first-responders including: State emergency management officials, local and State law enforcement, public health officials, and environmental agencies.**
2. **Develop and conduct regularly scheduled exercises to train emergency response participants and to improve your plan. Where possible, take advantage of existing exercises to revise and strengthen your own system. Exercises should include simulations of plant pest or disease outbreaks, control strategies, communication activities, political and regulatory processes, and emergency funding requests.**

G. Funding and Resources

Local emergency management systems need financial resources to function properly. At a minimum, funding mechanisms should be available so that States have a basic functioning system as described in these standards. Joint efforts by State and Federal plant health officials, emergency managers, and industry leaders need to develop contingency solutions to meet financial shortfalls.

Funding Standards

- 1. Identify the process for obtaining State emergency funds and other critical resources such as facilities, personnel, supplies, and equipment:**
 - a. When State emergency is declared.**
 - b. When NO State emergency is declared.**
- 2. Use practical exercises to walk through processes for obtaining funds.**
- 3. Ensure that sufficient funds are available for:**
 - a. Maintaining ongoing readiness to respond to plant health emergencies; and,**
 - b. Meeting actual emergency needs (indemnity, compensation, recovery).**

Standards for State Plant Health Emergency Management System

Standard	Check	Date
A. Emergency Management Plans		
1. Written plan for responding to plant health emergencies is executed and incorporated in the State emergency management plan.		
2. The plan should list all participants and their roles and responsibilities.		
3. The plan should be periodically evaluated (e.g., annual, bi-annual).		
B. Written Agreements – Agreements that detail the roles and responsibilities of:		
1. Plant health officials (SPHD, SPRO, and their respective staffs) for handling the initial local response to a plant health emergency.		
2. Plant health officials and State emergency management officials in responding to a plant health emergency.		
3. States that support each other in preparing for and responding to plant health emergencies.		
C. Authorities and Policies		
1. Quarantine authority for all plant pest species important to the economy of the State has been obtained and is clearly stated in writing.		
2. Appropriate officials, other than State personnel, who are authorized to issue emergency quarantine and restrict the movement of regulated articles, have been identified.		
3. Develop a policy for working on plant health issues which may result from natural or man-made disasters.		
4. Authorities for the control and eradication of the plant pest or disease, including the removal of infected/infested plants or trees, if necessary, have been clearly established.		
5. Jurisdictional issues for quarantine, control, and eradication activities on Tribal land have been discussed and clarified with Tribal Councils.		
6. Local authorities on environmental issues and jurisdiction have been identified.		
D. Survey, Containment, Control and Eradication		
1. Practice samples have been processed through CREES, State, Federal, or regional laboratories designated to identify new plant pests.		
2. Detection surveys for exotic pests of significance are conducted.		

3. Investigations on newly detected plant pests are conducted.		
4. Program responsibilities are communicated and coordinated with local, State, and Federal agencies, academia, industry, and other interested parties.		
5. Confirm pest identification, or provide specimen to appropriate taxonomic authority for identification.		
6. The public is informed of new plant pest detections or threats.		
7. New pest information is coordinated with USDA-APHIS-PPQ, State, and Federal agencies, State academic institutions, and industries.		
8. Appropriate State quarantines regulations are promulgated, implemented, and maintained.		
9. All activities of cooperative programs are coordinated with USDA-APHIS-PPQ.		
10. Review and coordinate control activities to ensure compliance with local, State, and Federal laws.		
E. Communication		
1. All pertinent contacts are identified.		
2. A plan to ensure adequate communication is developed.		
F. Training and Education		
1. Federal and State cooperators are trained on Incident Control System (ICS) procedures.		
2. An awareness and education program is developed.		
3. Develop regularly scheduled exercises to train the participants on the plan and to improve the plan.		
G. Funding and Resources		
1. Identify the process for obtaining State and Federal emergency funds and other critical resources such as facilities, personnel, supplies, and equipment.		
2. Use practical exercises to walk through processes for obtaining funds.		
3. Ensure that sufficient funds are available.		