

PowerPoint™ Presentations in PPQ: *Design Tips and Templates*

Making PowerPoint Presentation Slides

That old saw, “A picture is worth a thousand words,” is actually an understatement! Whenever you can use visual products to make your speeches and presentations more interesting, you should do so. But to make PowerPoint presentation graphics work best for APHIS and PPQ, all agency presenters’ slides should have the same “look and feel.” Fortunately, the Design Division of the Department of Agriculture—part of USDA’s Office of Communications—has prepared some guidance on this subject for agency personnel.

This tip sheet summarizes that guidance and gives examples of PowerPoint text slides that have been formatted to meet the USDA standards. It also includes two color palettes you can choose from in order to prepare graphics that reinforce PPQ’s corporate identity. Other units in APHIS may eventually have guides similar to this one, but only PPQ employees will be using the two color schemes shown here.

Content

How Much Is Too Much?

Let the content of your message drive the graphics—not the other way around. Your slides should be used to control the timing, pace, and flow of your talk. Obviously, they won’t contain the entire script of your presentation. But you should capture each important point in one or more relevant slides. And though you won’t be reading to the audience from the slides, they can keep you on your game plan and help you remember which topics in your speech are the most important ones for the audience to remember.

A good general rule is to prepare *one slide for every 2 minutes* of your talk. For example, a 30-minute presentation should have no more than 15 slides. Intersperse slides showing photos or graphs and charts with slides that have only text on them. Doing that helps keep your audience awake (no small consideration if your time slot is after lunch or if the auditorium has been greatly darkened to facilitate viewing).

Photos

Photos Imported Into PowerPoint

Photographs and other line art for use in PowerPoint presentations should not be made at a resolution higher than 72 dots per square inch (dpi). If the files for a picture are much more dense than that, they won’t work

in PowerPoint. For advice on this subject, consult APHIS’ photographer, Anson Eaglin, in Legislative and Public Affairs’ Public Affairs unit in Riverdale. You can reach Anson at (301) 734–8915.

Color

The Impact of Color

Research by the famous Wharton School of Finance at The University of Pennsylvania revealed that color can increase comprehension by more than 70 percent. But you have to choose colors wisely. Both color palettes in this leaflet exemplify the following general principles.

First, get used to using light-colored lettering on dark-colored backgrounds. That’s the opposite of what you generally see in printed materials, but the light-on-dark format makes projected images easier to read.

You can certainly have lettering in different colors. But use *the same color* for each title, for each first-degree head, for each second-degree head, and for all words in the body of your slides. Doing that will make it easier for your audience to grasp the structure and subordination of ideas in your talk.

Never use *blue and red* or *red and green* side by side. Juxtaposing those colors makes the eyes “jump,” causing your audience to squint and have trouble focusing on the text.

Plant Protection and Quarantine

Avoid red for general text lettering. Instead, choose red, orange, or burgundy for underlines, bullets, or single words you want to emphasize.

Avoid using green for text lettering because people who are color blind cannot see it well. [Some individuals have yellow–blue color blindness, but the inability to see reds and greens is much more common.]

Keep the number of colors low and the hues, except for the background color, bright. Don't try for tricky effects like printing every letter of a title in a different color or using exotic type styles. Your goal is to create slides that are interesting to look at and *easy to read*, even from the back rows of the auditorium. Wacky graphic effects just detract from the overall effectiveness of your presentation.

Typography

Choosing Fonts and Type Sizes To Improve Readability

Did you know there are literally thousands of different fonts, or “type faces”? PowerPoint supports only a limited number of these, but some are much better suited to making slides than others.

Typographers—specialists in this subject—generally divide all fonts into two big families: the “serif” fonts and the ones without serifs, which are called [in French] “sans-serif” fonts.

Serifs are the little squiggles and lines at the tops and bottoms of individual letters and numbers.

Most of the older (pre 20th-century) fonts have serifs, and using serif fonts in long documents makes them easier to read. But for graphics and short textual materials, *sans-serif fonts are better*. They don't have any squiggles on individual letters or numbers and are much cleaner and more modern looking.

Helvetica, Univers, Futura, and Verdana are examples of sans-serif fonts. Within the Microsoft Word™ / PowerPoint environment, *Arial* is the equivalent of Helvetica. *Arial* is your best choice for the letters on text slides and charts and graphs.

Size Matters

Type sizes are measured by the height of their capital letters. The unit of measurement is called a “point,” and 1 point equals 1/72 of an inch. For presentation graphics, optimal font sizes are between 26 and 45 points.

More than any other single factor, type size affects readability. Keep in mind the fact that not all of your target audience is sitting in the first five rows. Folks in the back need to be able to read what's on your slides, too. So never use a font size smaller than 18 points.

The sample slides show the title in 32-point *Arial* boldface, bullet 1 in 22-point *Arial*, and the subbullet in 18-point *Arial*.

Type Size Also Affects Content

Using big type sizes means you cannot put a great deal of text onto any one slide. *Seven* is your magic number. Don't put more than seven bulleted items on a slide. And don't type more than seven words in a given line.

ALL CAPS: Don't Go There

Never use all capital letters. They're hard to read and even harder to proofread.

In titles, capitalize the first letter of every important word. That includes all verbs, even short ones like “is.” Capitalize all prepositions that have four or more letters (e.g., “between,” “among,” “with,” and “from”).

Text Attributes

Text attributes are features of your type font that are used for special purposes. For instance, normal body type is set in “lightface,” but titles are always set in **bold** type. *Italics* [slanted type] is used to set scientific names for plants and animals and to set words you really need to emphasize. Underlining is a possible text attribute, but avoid using it: putting rules below letters impinges on letters that have descenders (the tails that hang down from such letters as lowercase “y” and “g”).



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Plant Protection and Quarantine

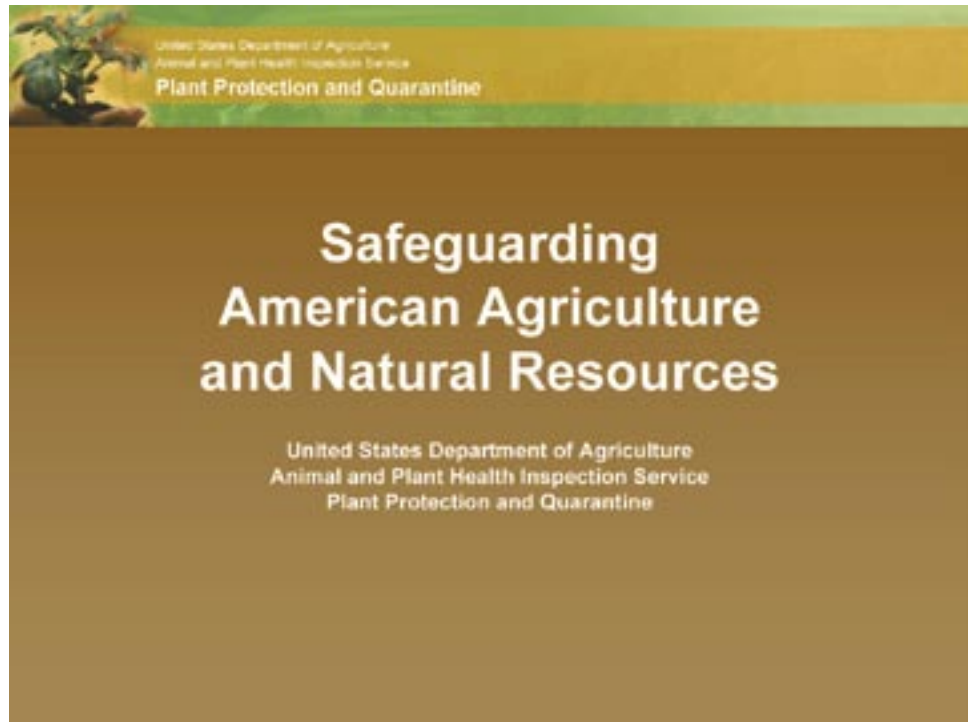
Stylesheet—Title Slide

Color Palette 1

SHOWN AT 50%
ACTUAL SIZE

Presentation Title
Font: Arial Bold
Size: 40 pt.

Identity
Font: Arial Bold
Size: 18 pt.



Stylesheet—Text Slide

Color Palette 1

SHOWN AT 50%
ACTUAL SIZE

Slide Title

Font: Arial Bold
Size: 32 pt.

Text

Bullet-level 1

Font: Arial
(bold & italic as needed)
Size: 22 pt.

Bullet-level 2

Font: Arial
(bold & italic as needed)
Size: 18 pt.



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Plant Protection and Quarantine

Elements of Pest Response Program

- Survey (Where are the pests?)
- Identification (What are they?)
- Regulation to prevent spread
 - Bans movement of materials with a quarantine
 - Restricts movement of materials through permits
- Control or eradication
 - Host removal
 - Pesticides
 - Agricultural production practices
 - Biological control
 - Sterile insect release

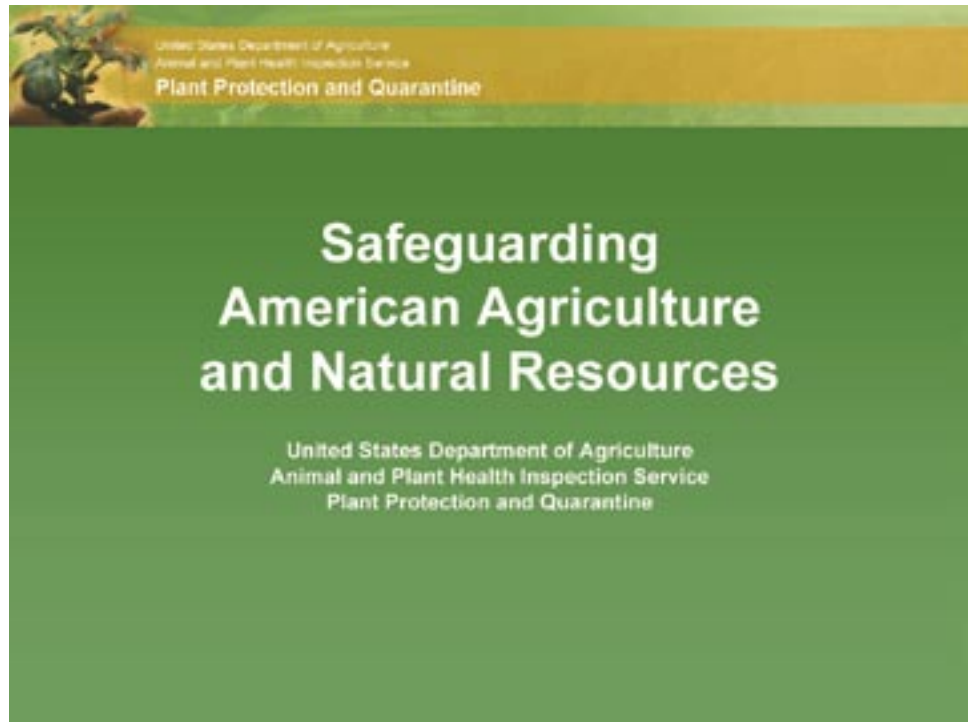
Stylesheet—Title Slide

Color Palette 2

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Presentation Title
Font: Arial Bold
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Identity
Font: Arial Bold
Size: 18 pt.



Stylesheet—Text Slide

Color Palette 2

SHOWN AT 50%
ACTUAL SIZE

Slide Title

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Text

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