

2008 Farm Bill: Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention

BACKGROUND

In May, 2008, *H.R. 6124 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008*, otherwise known as the Farm Bill, became law. In *Section 10201, Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention*, the Secretary is directed to make available Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds for early detection and rapid response of pest threats. The 5-year Farm Bill specifies that these funds are to be made available incrementally, starting with \$12 million in FY09, \$45 million in FY10, and \$50 million in FY11 and thereafter.

The Farm Bill requires the Secretary to do the following under this section:

- (1) In consultation with the National Plant Board and other interested parties, to enter into a cooperative agreement with each State department of agriculture that agrees to conduct early plant pest detection and surveillance activities.
- (2) To establish a threat identification and mitigation program to determine and address threats to the domestic production of crops. In conducting the threat identification and mitigation program, the Secretary must develop risk assessments of the potential threat to the agricultural industry of the United States from foreign sources, collaborate with the National Plant Board, and implement action plans for high consequence plant pests and diseases.

- (3) To provide funds and technical assistance to specialty crop growers, organizations representing specialty crop growers, and State and local agencies working with specialty crop growers and organizations for the development and implementation of audit-based certification systems and nursery plant pest risk management systems, in collaboration with the nursery industry, research institutions, and other entities to address plant pests.

STATUS

As a means to provide structure to the process of addressing the above requirements, and to build upon the existing framework of the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS), the APHIS Administrator directed PPQ to engage the National Plant Board and other interested parties (FACA does not apply), with developing a business plan with funding objectives.

Accordingly, APHIS convened a three day meeting, July 29-31, in Frederick, MD with the National CAPS Committee (includes National Plant Board representatives) and PPQ with this end in mind. The CAPS agreements provide the quickest mechanism to transfer funds to states; thereby enabling immediate implementation of the Farm bill provisions in FY09, including new ideas beyond traditional CAPS agreements.

As a result of discussions, meetings and correspondence to date, the following Goals and Objectives for Implementing Section 10201 have been proposed:

- 1) Enhanced Analysis and Surveys with three primary components:
 - Application of robust analytical tools to identify and target high risk pathways/ports of entry survey activity using comprehensive datasets;
 - Supplemental funding of the highest priority pest surveys; and
 - Enhancement of State cooperative agreements.

2) Domestic Inspection Activities with two primary components:

- Promote and expand inland inspections of container and mail facilities and
- Expand the use of canine teams for domestic survey and detection activities.

3) Pest Identification & Technology Enhancement with two primary components:

- Improve all aspects of early detection resources and expand both formal and
- On the job training.

4) Safeguarding Nursery Production with two primary components:

- Help support the initiation of nursery certification programs and
- Establish a fully functional experimental nursery for such diseases as *Phytophthora ramorum*.

5) Outreach and Education with two primary components:

- Educating industry and the public about the importance of exotic new pest and disease introductions and
- Engaging industry and the public to report new pests that could negatively impact the U.S. agricultural system and natural environment.

6) Rapid Response with two primary components:

- Provide funds to respond to regulatory significant new pests before they become established and cause significant economic damages.
- Enhance delimiting survey and the deployment of immediate pest response tactics necessary for rapid and successful mitigation of damages and pest establishment.

Next Steps:

- APHIS will continue to work closely with its Federal, State, and industry cooperators to ensure that available funding is allocated fairly, effectively, and efficiently—consistent with mandated responsibilities in this Section.
- APHIS is expecting to have these goals/objectives and the implementation strategy vetted with our

cooperators, leading to a finalized business plan by the end of 2008, including new activities beyond traditional CAPS agreements.

- APHIS will announce meetings where stakeholders will be invited to discuss the allocation of the \$12 million in FY 09, with consideration given to new or expanded activities commensurate with increased funding in FY 10 and beyond.
- APHIS will establish and solidify the requirements for areas of funding to cooperators for FY09.

Pest Detection Overview

The Pest Detection program is funded as an Agency “line-item”, via the annual appropriation process. It supports APHIS’ goal of safeguarding U.S. agricultural and environmental resources by ensuring that new introductions of harmful plant pests and diseases are detected as soon as possible, before they have a chance to cause significant damage. These efforts are accomplished by involving stakeholders and the scientific community, and leveraging efforts by other Agencies in USDA, government entities, State departments of agriculture, universities, and industry partners.

Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS)

The Agency and its cooperators carry out surveys for high-risk pests with Pest Detection funding through a network of cooperators in the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) program. The CAPS program conducts science-based national and state surveys targeted at specific exotic plant pests, diseases, and weeds identified as threats to U.S. agriculture and/or the environment. The program aims to survey for high-threat pests that are not known to be in the US, as well as some that are of limited distribution but under a domestic quarantine either at the national or state level. In so doing, pest-free regions are identified that allow the continued export of commodities from particular areas of the country. When quarantine significant pests are found, the program rapidly communicates those discoveries so that appropriate risk-based mitigation tactics are employed before the pest spreads further and causes economic or environmental harm.

PEST DETECTION PROGRAM MILESTONES

- 1929 The United States has a long history of pest detection activities. A seminal element of the detection program is the fruit fly exclusion and detection program which was first authorized in 1929 by 7 USC 147; PL 78-425.
- 1950-1976 Centralized reporting of voluntary observations has been attempted at various times by USDA. One example of these efforts was the “post card surveys” during the 1950’s to the late 1970’s. Prepaid post cards were distributed across the country to extension agents and crop specialists. These cards often had key organisms listed which allowed agents to check off pest finds with a small amount of space for individual notations. USDA staff published these findings in a biweekly or once a month report such as the Cooperative Economic Insect Report. One of the reasons for the development of the National Agricultural Pest Information System (NAPIS) at the time of the computer/PC revolution (early 1980’s) was to replace the hardcopy publications which formerly reported survey results. Thus the Cooperative Plant Pest Report, the Cooperative Economic Insect Report, and the Plant Disease Report are no longer published by USDA.
- 1976 Detection efforts were further enhanced through the pest surveillance and detection program that began in 1976 under the enabling legislation 7 USC 147; PL 78-425.
- 1980 An initiative was begun by the Intersociety Consortium for Plant Protection (ICPP) to identify the plant pest information needs of federal and state agencies and national and international organizations involved in protecting agriculture. The ICPP report provided the background information needed to launch the current CAPS program.
- 1982 In 1982, the Cooperative National Plant Pest Survey and Detection Program (CNPPSDP) began as a pilot effort in 16 States. The forerunner of the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program, CNPPSDP served as a cooperative program of State survey systems with national coordination provided by USDA-APHIS-PPQ.
- 1985 APHIS began an exotic pest pheromone trapping system in 1985.
- 1986 Cooperative agreements have been in effect with all 50 States since 1986. The NAPIS database of the mid-1980’s was a product of the computing power and the accessibility constraints of its time. Seven record types containing over 100 fields was the basic structure of a database housed on leased IBM computing power at Martin Marietta in Florida and then at Planning Research Center (PRC) in Virginia. Data accessibility was limited to two years immediately before the current year. The first database training sessions were held at PRC in 1986 to train users on data entry, editing, and reporting via ADABAS/NATURAL. Three hundred baud modems were giving way to 1200 baud with a hint of 2400 in the future.
- 1987 The program name was changed to the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) program. Data entry issues such as limitations on the number of state record entries to 40,000 per year had been resolved. Efforts to focus on quality data sets versus attempting to record everything that moved was beginning to be realized. The advent of the computer did not mean that paper and pencil were no longer needed. Also it was no longer sufficient to just “put records in” but the need to be able to extract information in return and complete a true two-way flow was acknowledged. The Land grant institutions were named by 75-80% of the states to be their lead organization engaged in CAPS. PPQ funding was generally a flat base amount of \$30,000 with occasional addition funds for special projects. Annual national meetings occurred from 1987-1992. See <http://pest.ceris.purdue.edu/>

- 1992 CAPS was redirected to address a reduced set of goals and objectives more realistically suited to the available resources and within the mission of APHIS-PPQ.
- 1996 PPQ's top management officials met in 1996 to discuss how to redefine and implement its goals. Together with their state counterparts at the National Plant Board (NPB), the Safeguarding Review Study was formed.
- 1999 The Safeguarding Review Report, *Safeguarding America's Plant Resources*, was released in July, 1999. The review contained more than 300 recommendations, some of which were already planned or underway, while others represented completely new approaches. One of the most critical areas of need identified in the Safeguarding Review was the need to strengthen the pest detection infrastructure and to develop a more effective system for prioritizing pest detection activities. The current processes and information systems used to support the survey, inspection, monitoring, risk assessment, detection, and reporting activities carried out under the CAPS program needed to be improved to reduce the risk of invasive plant pests entering the United States and to reduce the response time if an incident occurred. See http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/safeguarding/index.shtml
- 2001 The events of September 11, 2001, led to recognition that we must strengthen pest detection if we are to ensure the future of food security in America. As a result, the FY 2002 supplemental appropriation provided \$25 million in pest detection funds, which is used for critical needs such as surveys to support ongoing emergency programs and other pest management programs, and for supporting a stronger federal-state cooperative pest detection program. To meet these needs, CAPS was assigned more invasive plant pest detection and response priorities and with implementing proactive survey and detection activities in the United States.
- 2003 After implementing many of the recommendations from the 1999 *Safeguarding Review*, the National CAPS Committee identified the need for an internal review to assess the present status of the CAPS program and to develop a plan for future changes. On November 6th and 7th, 2003, a working group of stakeholders from State, university, and federal agencies assembled to review the accomplishments and plan for the future functionality and performance of the CAPS program including the NAPIS database. The outcome of the meeting was a list of 224 items on how to optimize the CAPS Program to improve our abilities to protect domestic plant resources from non-native plant pests and invasive exotic species with specific items pertaining to NAPIS.
- 2004 The Integrated Survey Information System (ISIS), initially developed to assist electronic data collection in the field, expands to a database and is installed on the APHIS server at Ft. Collins, CO. see <http://ppgcoop.aphis.usda.gov/web/Default.aspx?alias=ppgcoop.aphis.usda.gov/web/isis>
- 2005 The *NAPIS System Assessment Report* (begun in 2003) was delivered to APHIS by the contractor. Various alternatives for addressing technical shortcomings, stakeholder needs, and information system/source requirements were evaluated and the most comprehensive and cost-effective alternative was identified. The report provided information which PPQ is considering while developing the Plant Health Information System (see next milestone in 2005), and evaluating how best to leverage data-collection, interpretation, and reporting efforts with various cooperators.

- 2005 The Deputy Administrator and Executive Team for PPQ established the Emergency Program Data Management Task Force (Task Force). The charge to the Task Force was to explore the possibility of developing a single data management system designed to maximize our ability in responding to plant health emergencies. The Task Force recommended building the Plant Health Information System (PHIS) as a system to be used in domestic or day-to-day operations to more efficiently facilitate its use in emergency programs. The PHIS supports PPQ and cooperating state agencies in managing information related to domestic and emergency plant pest programs. The PHIS is currently working towards finalizing pilot trials, incorporating feedback from these pilots, and migrating to a full production environment by the end of the calendar year 2008. see http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/phis/
- 2006 The 2006 NPB CAPS Advisory Group worked with PPQ to evaluate shortcomings of the CAPS program. Roles and responsibilities, mission, and pest lists were among several issues that were addressed collaboratively, resulting in new guidelines.
- 2007 The CAPS Program Guidebook (not revised since August 11, 2003), was completely revised for 2008 upon consideration of the recommendations of the 1999 Safeguarding Review, the 2006 NPB CAPS Advisory Group, and the National CAPS Committee (NCC). The 2008 guidelines provided a new mission statement for CAPS, which was developed by the NPB CAPS Advisory Group and endorsed by the NCC and the Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Executive Team.
- 2008 The CAPS Program Guidebook was again updated for 2009.
- May 22, 2008 ***H.R. 6124 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, otherwise known as the Farm Bill, became law.*** In Section 10201, Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention, the Secretary is directed to make available Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds for early detection and rapid response of pest threats. The 5-year Farm Bill specifies that these funds are to be made available incrementally, starting with \$12 million in FY09, \$45 million in FY10, and \$50 million in FY11 and thereafter. Pest Detection has been charged, in consultation with the Plant Board and other interested parties (FACA does not apply), with developing a business plan with funding objectives. see link to "H.R.6124.ENR": <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/thomas>
- June 23, 2008 ***Formation of APHIS Executive Board*** - In order to develop a timely and effectively implementation strategy, APHIS has formed an executive board comprised of officials from APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) program that reports to the APHIS Associate Administrator.
- July 1, 2008 ***APHIS Consultation with Stakeholders***- APHIS gathers input from the States, industry groups, and various agriculture organizations. APHIS and other USDA officials met with the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, representing more than 120 specialty crop organizations, to discuss implementation of this and many other provisions in the Farm Bill.
- July 29-31, 2008 ***National Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey Committee (NCC) Meeting*** - Current program and regulatory authorities contained in the Plant Protection Act both fully support and facilitate implementation of the 2008 Farm Bill Section 10201 beginning in FY 2009. As part of APHIS' ongoing program responsibilities, PPQ carries out a pest detection program which includes the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS). Pest detection is an ideally structured framework from which to fully implement Section 10201 of the Farm Bill.

August 1, 2008 The President submitted amendments to the FY2009 budget for the Department of Agriculture. The amendments propose adjustments to mandatory funding provided in the 2008 Farm Bill. One of the proposals for consideration by Congress is to permanently cancel \$12 million in FY 2009 funding for Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention.

August 14, 2008 NPB Annual Meeting session on the 2008 Farm Bill: Section 10201, *Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention*. This kicked off an expanded dialogue with constituents, where 26 States and industry representatives were in attendance. A White Paper was provided to participants and later posted to the PPQ Pest Detection website:
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/pest_detection/downloads/farmbill-whitepaper.pdf

August 14, 2008 CAPS work plans for FY2009 were due to the PPQ Regional offices from cooperators. This is the milestone established by the National CAPS Committee for normal agreements that must be processed through the SPHD and Regional Offices.

August 20, 2008 APHIS is invited to a meeting of the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance's "Implementation Team - Horticulture/APHIS."

August 25, 2008 APHIS is invited to talk with the California Agricultural Commissioners about its plans to address the Farm Bill.

September 1, 2008 Discussions ensue with the Department about ideas to address Section 10201, with the goal of developing a Business Plan.

October 14, 2008 APHIS attends a meeting called by the California Specialty Crops Council to talk about invasive species, detection and surveillance, and other issues.

October 14, 2008 APHIS is invited to brief the Senate Agriculture Committee on its plans to implement sections of the Farm Bill.

Oct. 17 to Dec. 31, 2008 APHIS continues to seek input from the National Plant Board and other interested parties (FACA does not apply), in order to develop a multiyear business plan with funding objectives.

December 3-4, 2008 A national CAPS Conference was convened in Phoenix, AZ, with all 50 States and territories. The agenda included a dialogue about the future of the CAPS program and opportunities to enhance cooperation via the 2008 Farm Bill, *Section 10201, Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention*.

December 31, 2008 Implementation Plan for Section 10201 to be released to the public if approved by the Department.

December 31, 2008 New CAPS Cooperative Agreements are in place for CY 2009. Guidance to initiate new agreements to address Section 10201 of the Farm Bill are distributed.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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For information on CAPS, contact the National Survey Coordinator, Dr. John Bowers at John.Bowers@aphis.usda.gov or (301) 734-3658.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PEST DETECTION

You can learn more at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/pest_detection/index.shtml

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