

PPQ Promising Practices Award
Submission Form

Nominee: Susan Spinella
Address: 1000 2nd Ave, Suite 2200, Seattle, WA 98104
Job Title: Agriculture Program Manager
Organization: Customs and Border Protection, Seattle Field Office
Phone: 206-553-6944 x 619

Nominee: Charles Cunningham
Address: 9901 Pacific Highway, Blaine, WA 98230
Job Title: Supervisory Agriculture Specialist
Organization: Customs and Border Protection, Port of Blaine
Phone: 360-332-1640

Customs and Border Protection's Seattle Field Office is responsible for 67 ports of entry (POEs) in five northern border states, plus SeaTac Airport and seaports on Puget Sound. Throughout the Field Office there are many ports where Supervisory CBP Officers (SCBPOs) and CBP managers directly oversee agriculture programs and/or supervise agriculture specialists. There are 16 POEs with permanently assigned agriculture specialists, but only five have supervisory agriculture specialists. Even within ports that are staffed with agriculture supervisors, some agriculture specialists are under the direct supervision of a SCBPO.

Though all CBP Officers (CBPOs) and SCBPOs have received basic agriculture training and many have received the more specialized Agriculture Procedures Training, these courses do not prepare them to effectively direct agriculture inspections and allocate agriculture resources.

As an Agriculture Program Manager (APM) in the Seattle Field Office, Susan Spinella recognized the need to provide these key CBP supervisors and managers with non-technical training in agriculture program oversight. Susan proposed and justified a training program focused on agriculture program oversight and resource allocation. The Seattle DFO approved and funded the project.

Blaine Supervisory CBP Agriculture Specialist (SCBPAS) Charlie Cunningham was recruited to assist on the project. Together in the spring of 2007, Charlie and Susan developed a 12 hour course which includes sections on agriculture specialist duties, agriculture reports, data review and interpretation, use of manuals, pest interceptions, prioritization of agriculture inspections and other topics relevant to program oversight. The course consists of five PowerPoint presentations, and many hand-on exercises conducted in a computer lab. The exercises focus on the use of the Manual for Agriculture Clearance and the

Canadian Border Manual, and on the review and interpretation of forms and reports.

APM Spinella and SCBPAS Cunningham teamed up to conduct two training sessions in 2007. Twenty-six Supervisory CBPOs, Chief CBPOs and other managers from 15 ports in the Field Office have completed the course.

Feedback and results have been very positive. Many of the trainees said that this training is long overdue. Other Field Offices have expressed an interest in adapting the training for their locations. Some specific outcomes have been:

- Revision of work schedules to expand hours of agriculture specialist coverage at POEs and align coverage to periods of approaching risk.
- Increased interest in and support of the pest interception program.
- Better understanding of the scope of responsibilities of agriculture specialists and inspection priorities has led to a better allocation of agriculture resources.
- Increased focus on passenger clearance in northern border ports, resulting in increased quarantine material interceptions.
- Increased recognition of the agriculture nexus in many day-to-day CBP activities and processes.
- Supervisors promoting use of AQIM data for targeting and special operations.
- Improved data consistency and review of data to identify gaps and deficiencies.
- More overall support of the agriculture program and acceptance of the agriculture mission.
- More focus on CBPO enforcement of agriculture regulations and use of Canadian Border Manual when agriculture specialists are unavailable.

This initiative is clearly improving CBPs ability to accomplish the priority mission of excluding foreign pests and animal diseases. It has heightened focus and improved understanding of agriculture programs by CBP supervisors and managers who are in positions to affect the manner in which agriculture resources are used. Given the extensive coverage of CBP at ports of entry of all sizes, it is likely that managers without previous agriculture training will continue to play an important part in directing agriculture inspections. This agriculture oversight training program is a critical tool for preparing managers to effectively contribute to CBPs pest exclusion efforts.