

# Implementation Action Plan

## Pest Identification

### Issue:

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) need a joint comprehensive plan to establish standards of service in pest identification, training, and discard authority.

### Recommended Response:

- Develop a customer service standard and a system for measuring whether the standard is being met.  
Formalize and create a master template for monthly pest and disease interception highlights that is utilized by each CBP field office. Enhance the communication of this template nationwide.
- Formalize pest identification and inspection training of agriculture specialists throughout all pathways (e.g., conveyances, passenger, cargo, mail, rail, etc).
- Work jointly toward developing flexible schedules for identifiers to cover peak periods of cargo activity.
- Develop an effective and efficient method to provide immediate feedback on pest identifications including detailed results and disposition guidance.
- Develop an effective and immediate method of disseminating pest alerts throughout APHIS and CBP including appropriate communication with stakeholders.
- Establish and maintain CBPAS performance elements for discard authority and pest interception.
- Create training and discard authority program for CBP Agriculture Specialists specific to geographic areas served by the port of entry (e.g., Mexican Border).
- Grant CBP access to APHIS' Pest Identification (Pest ID) database.

### Correlation to Report Recommendation or Other Feedback:

OIG and GAO reports expressed concerns regarding timeliness of pest identification and notification of pest identification results. Stakeholders and issues identified through Joint Quality Assurance Program reflect similar concerns.

### Findings:

CBP and APHIS have made positive steps to implement the Cargo Release Authority Program for the Agriculture Specialists.

# Implementation Action Plan

## Pest Identification

- The Agriculture Quarantine Activity System (AQAS) provides access to the Pest ID database for the Agriculture Specialists.
- Pest identification information is not shared consistently in a standardized format.
- There is a backlog in pest identifications outside of cargo operations. Pests found in cargo impacting trade are identified in a timely manner.
- In certain port locations APHIS identifier's schedules do not coincide with all peak cargo times. Timely identifications are not always possible because identifier resources are limited.
- CBP and APHIS need to work more effectively to adopt meaningful performance measures for intercepting foreign pests and disease in all pathways.
- The process of timely dissemination of agriculture pest alerts needs to be reviewed.
- There is a need to enhance and coordinate pest identification training between APHIS and CBP.

### Expected Outcome:

- Reduced backlog of pest interception identifications
- More accurate and up-to-date data for performance measures, risk and trend analysis, etc.
- Timely feedback from the identifiers to the Agriculture Specialists regarding pest identifications
- Enhanced scientific interest by CBP Agriculture Specialists in pest identification and safeguarding correlating in improved morale
- Expedited release of cargo shipments due to increased discard authorities
- An increase in pest interceptions due to better pest information and training available to the Agriculture Specialists

### Implementation Plan:

#### Tasks

- Standardize the monthly pest identification reports from APHIS identifiers which will be submitted to CBP for distribution.
- APHIS will develop and implement a pest identification and detection liaison position to support and coordinate training and discard authorities.
- Develop performance measures, including individual performance elements, for pest and disease interceptions in all pathways.
- Review tours of duty and resources for identification to improve pest identification services.

# Implementation Action Plan

## Pest Identification

- Implement a safe and secure process of returning the actual pest interception back to the port's pest collection.
- Develop and implement a method of communication for sharing pest interceptions interagency, intraagency, or with stakeholders, as appropriate.

### Communications Needs

- Review and approval by Agency/Senior management.
- APHIS will develop a plan to communicate with stakeholders regarding pest information.

### Accountable Individual/Group

Deputy Administrator and Assistant Commissioner, Office of Field Operations

### Resources

- Staff resources from APHIS and CBP
- Commitment to provide and empower the resources needed to complete the action plan.

### Sequencing / Linkages

- Planning Action Plan
- Outreach / Communication Action Plan
- Performance Measures Action Plan
- Resources Action Plan
- Training Action Plan

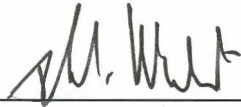
### Challenges to Implementation

- Access to Federal Inspection Services areas for on-the-job training purposes
- LMR challenges

# Implementation Action Plan Pest Identification

**Review Block** -- for the use of Agency/Department leadership in adopting, modifying, or rejecting the plan.

Pest Identification Implementation Action Plan adopted by both agencies on June 26, 2007, by:



Thomas S. Winkowski  
Deputy Assistant Commissioner  
Office of Field Operations  
US Customs & Border Protection  
US Department of Homeland Security



Paul R. Eggert  
Associate Deputy Administrator  
Plant Protection & Quarantine  
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service  
US Department of Agriculture

JUN 26 2007