

Implementation Action Plan

Resources

Issue:

Improve the agriculture mission through more transparent financial accountability of Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection (AQI) resources and more effective and efficient programmatic and human capital resource management.

Recommended Response:

- Develop a transparent financial tracking system for AQI user fees and appropriate funds for both the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).
- Develop expedited recruitment and hiring and classification plans to attract and retain high-quality candidates with science backgrounds.
- Reinvigorate the CBP Agriculture Canine Program.
- Ensure adequate equipment, supplies, and facilities.

Correlation to Report Recommendation or Other Feedback:

The stakeholders, OIG, and GAO were concerned with financial accountability and had concerns about various specific program issues such as canine and risk-based staffing

Findings:

DHS needs to undertake a full review of the financial systems, policy, and procedures for the AQI program to ensure financial accountability for funds allocated for agricultural quarantine inspections. APHIS and CBP need to ensure that accounting processes for agricultural functions are transparent. APHIS and CBP need to maximize the utilization of available resources. The Agencies need to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the agriculture canine assets and enhance integration of APHIS expertise into CBP operations. CBP should ensure that recruitment and retention strategies include the utilization of all available tools. CBP should utilize a risk-based staffing model when determining deployment of agricultural staff. CBP should ensure that the necessary equipment and supplies and facilities are procured and made available in order to support the agriculture mission.

Expected Outcome:

A full compliment of performance measures exist to measure the effectiveness of the AQI program and the use of user fee and appropriated dollars. A more

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transparent user fee accounting system and methodology is in place within CBP. A more robust canine program will feed into these measures by improving compliance and interceptions of prohibited material. APHIS assists CBP in reviewing facility, equipment, and supply needs at ports of entry.

Implementation Plan:

Tasks

- Develop an effective and transparent financial management system to ensure accountability for AQI user fees and agriculture appropriated funds.
- Develop a joint comprehensive risk-based staffing model.
- Develop an effective recruitment and retention policy for Agricultural Specialists by FY09.
- Develop an effective recruitment and retention policy for Agricultural Specialists-Canine.
- Enhance the CBP Agriculture Canine Program:
 - Deploy canine teams based on agreed-upon staffing models by FY08.
 - Ensure that canine teams are at full proficiency and utilization by FY08.
 - Ensure training is provided on an ongoing basis to dog teams by utilizing the expertise of the training center.
 - APHIS and CBP jointly determine, by environment, minimum standards for facilities; types/kinds/amounts of equipment and supplies and initiate plans to comply with standards as soon as possible identifying locations with highest priority.
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Communications Needs

- Senior leaders in CBP and DHS would need to request support from their appropriate staffs for the large projects being recommended, including a restructuring of their financial reporting system for AQI funds; and developing action and implementation plans for the canine program. Need to ensure all plans are shared with all levels of CBP. Key management support for the plan is needed.
- Communication throughout all interested units in APHIS.
- Follow up stakeholder meeting with CBP and APHIS to communicate the plan.
- Continued support from both agencies to sustain objectives of the plan and continued communication with stakeholders.

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Accountable Individual/Group

- Secretaries of Homeland Security and Agriculture
- Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection and Administrator of APHIS

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- Financial resources will be needed to upgrade any facility, equipment or supplies. Some human capital will be needed to develop other resource issues.
- Commitment to provide and empower the resources needed to complete the action plan.

Sequencing / Linkages

- Structure and Leadership Action Plan
- Planning Action Plan

Challenges to Implementation

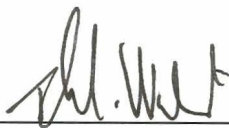
Development of a transparent system of financial resources

Finite resources

Track the funding to match the activities

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

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



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