

**Plant Pest Identification Notifications to State Departments of Agriculture**  
**March 21, 2008**  
**Amended July 21, 2008\***

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Plant Protection and Quarantine  
Emergency and Domestic Programs

Introduction

Timely notification of new plant pest, disease, or noxious weed identifications is critical for effective response planning, execution, and communications. Plant Protection and Quarantine's (PPQ) Emergency and Domestic Programs (EDP) staff are responsible for communicating presumptive and confirmatory pest identifications to internal and external parties. EDP staff receives its pest identification information from the PPQ National Identification Service (NIS) staff. This communication protocol applies to communication of results of identification or diagnosis of samples that were forwarded to NIS-recognized authorities because they were considered potentially actionable suspect samples (PASS) by the submitters. The communication protocol is intended to assure timely transmission of pest identification notifications, either by e-mail or telephone, to internal and external parties who coordinate actions to address this information, including a possible response.

Notification Considerations

The protocols address two situations:

1. Notifications that occur *prior to the confirmed identification* of a plant pest. This situation includes a suspect pest, or presumptive positive submission being submitted to NIS-recognized authorities by State laboratories, the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN), or other designated pest identification authority for initial identification.
2. Notifications that occur upon *confirmation, either positive or negative*, of pest identifications. While NIS may use other officially recognized laboratory or expert identifiers to identify a pest, NIS will always be the direct link to EDP for pest identification results; external labs or experts are not to communicate results directly to any entity except NIS.

In both situations, EDP will be notified by NIS. The urgency and circulation of notifications may vary widely based upon the plant pest's regulatory significance and history. Accordingly, there are two primary questions to be asked to determine the circulation list for notifications within PPQ and to outside cooperators: (1) is this a new

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\* PPQ Diagnostic Notification to States v3c.pdf  
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pest detection, and (2) if not, is there already a management/eradication program already underway in the United States?

### Limiting Conditions

When conditions allow, EDP will notify parties of pre- and post-pest identification confirmations within minutes if possible, and within 24 hours as a standard. PPQ wishes to strike a balance between notifying parties of all suspect samples (including potentially thousands of samples pending analysis by non-PPQ laboratories) to which it has been made aware, and notifying parties only of the most significant findings when confirmations are completed.

It is important to clarify that there will be situations where there is not enough information about a suspect plant pest detection to confirm the identity of the pest. Making this determination may take some time, based upon the biology of a pest and the availability of relevant scientific expertise and literature. For example, many plant pathogens can only be identified through molecular techniques. It also can be difficult to identify some insect pests in larval or pupal life stages. There may be situations where so little is known about an unidentified plant pest that new diagnostic protocols must be developed and validated to accomplish the identification.

While we believe that this notification protocol will broadly serve to ensure more timely and effective notification of suspect pest submission, presumptive identification, and identification confirmation, it may not be applicable in all circumstances. In the event that they are not applicable, the protocol can be used as a basis for determining how best to communicate internally and externally under the given circumstances.


### Notification Protocol

For both new pests and established program pests, the guide on the following pages identifies standardized subject lines and the individual and points of contact who must receive notification from EDP.

Notifications of pest identifications and diagnostic results are sent from NIS to the EDP Leadership Team and the EDP staff who will forward the notifications. Notifications are forwarded as in the tables that follow. It is the responsibility of those receiving the notifications to further forward the message to those in their respective organization or agency that have a need to know, as well as the submitting laboratory, identifier, or originator of the sample(s).

**TABLE 1: Deciding Subject Heading and Distribution for Pest Status Memos**

If the message is to communicate the status of a pest that is:	And identification is:	Then send the message:	And title the subject as:
<p><b>Not</b> new to the U.S.</p>	<p>Pending</p>	<p><b>To:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPQ National Program Manager</li> <li>▪ PPQ Regional Program Manager</li> <li>▪ PPQ Senior Regional Program Manager</li> <li>▪ SPHD of affected state</li> <li>▪ SPRO of affected state</li> </ul> <p><b>CC:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NSPL (CPHST) for plant pathogens / weeds <b>or</b> NSPL (CPHST) for invertebrates / biocontrol</li> <li>▪ CPHST Director</li> <li>▪ Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator (NIS)</li> </ul>	<p>SUSPECT FWD: genus, species (common name or abbreviation) from (state two-letter code)</p>
	<p>Confirmed</p>	<p><b>To:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPQ National Program Manager</li> <li>▪ PPQ Regional Program Manager</li> <li>▪ PPQ Senior Regional Program Manager</li> <li>▪ SPHD of affected state</li> <li>▪ SPRO of affected state</li> </ul> <p><b>CC:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NSPL (CPHST) for plant pathogens / weeds <b>or</b> NSPL (CPHST) for invertebrates / biocontrol</li> <li>▪ CPHST Director</li> <li>▪ Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator (NIS)</li> </ul>	<p>CONFIRMED ID / CONFIRMED NEGATIVE: genus, species, common name (or abbreviation) (Positive or Negative) from state (two-letter code). In body of the message, say: "Please forward to the appropriate laboratory, identifier, or originator of the sample."</p>
<p><b>New</b> to the U.S. but most likely is <b>not</b> significant</p>	<p>Pending</p>	<p><b>To:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPQ National Program Manager</li> <li>▪ PPQ Regional Program Manager</li> <li>▪ PPQ Senior Regional Program Manager</li> <li>▪ SPHD of affected state</li> <li>▪ SPRO of affected state</li> </ul> <p><b>CC:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NSPL (CPHST) for plant pathogens / weeds <b>or</b> NSPL (CPHST) for invertebrates / biocontrol</li> <li>▪ CPHST NSPL Response and Recovery</li> <li>▪ CPHST Director</li> <li>▪ NPAG</li> <li>▪ Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator (NIS)</li> </ul>	<p>SUSPECT FWD: genus, species (common name or abbreviation) from (state two-letter code)</p>
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<b>New</b> to US and is easily recognized as <b>significant</b>		As appears on the table that follows
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**TABLE 1-1: Deciding Subject Heading and Distribution for Pest Status Memos for Pests New to US and is Easily Recognized as Significant**

If the Identification is:	Then send the message:	And title the subject as:
Pending	<b>To:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPQ National Program Manager</li> <li>▪ PPQ Regional Program Manager</li> <li>▪ PPQ Senior Regional Program Manager</li> <li>▪ SPHD of affected state</li> <li>▪ SPRO of affected state</li> </ul> <b>CC:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NSPL (CPHST) for plant pathogens/ weeds <b>or</b> NSPL (CPHST) for invertebrates / biocontrol</li> <li>▪ CPHST NSPL Response and Recovery</li> <li>▪ CPHST Director</li> <li>▪ PPQ Executive Team</li> <li>▪ PIM Director</li> <li>▪ LPA Public Affairs Director</li> <li>▪ NPB President</li> <li>▪ NPAG</li> <li>▪ Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator (NIS)</li> </ul>	SUSPECT FWD: genus, species (common name or abbreviation) from (state two-letter code)
Confirmed	<b>To:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPQ National Program Manager</li> <li>▪ PPQ Regional Program Manager</li> <li>▪ PPQ Senior Regional Program Manager</li> <li>▪ SPHD of affected state</li> <li>▪ SPRO of affected state</li> </ul> <b>CC:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NSPL (CPHST) for plant pathogens/ weeds <b>or</b> NSPL (CPHST) for invertebrates / biocontrol</li> <li>▪ CPHST NSPL Response and Recovery</li> <li>▪ CPHST Director</li> <li>▪ PPQ Executive Team</li> <li>▪ PIM Director</li> <li>▪ LPA Public Affairs Director</li> <li>▪ NPB President</li> <li>▪ NPAG</li> <li>▪ Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator (NIS)</li> </ul>	CONFIRMED ID / CONFIRMED NEGATIVE: genus, species, common name (or abbreviation) (Positive or Negative) from state (two-letter code). In body of the message, say: "Please forward to the appropriate laboratory, identifier, or originator of the sample."