

# Implementation Action Plan

## Information Management

### Issue:

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) need to develop a coordinated and comprehensive process to identify essential and common data elements. CBP and APHIS need to evaluate all information systems useful in compiling and expressing outcomes. CBP and APHIS need to ensure data quality and integrity and that analysis of program information is coordinated. Consistency is needed in both data input and output.

### Recommended Response:

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- Jointly develop coordinated short- and long-range plans to improve information system performance.
- Integrate processes and procedures that improve data management and enhance the joint analytical process.
- Use established processes, to identify those common data elements and attributes that support performance measures, risk-based staffing models, and risk and trend analysis.
- Ensure mutual access to each Agency's databases to support critical activities.

### Correlation to Report Recommendation or Other Feedback:

The GAO Report of March 2005 recommended that the Secretaries of Agriculture and Homeland Security streamline the flow of information between USDA and DHS agricultural inspectors and expedite the integration of the two Agency's databases and information technology systems at the port level.

### Findings:

#### Information Technology (IT) Systems:

- Data sharing and electronic communications between CBP and APHIS are unreliable due to incompatibility of systems or other technology issues.
- Security requirements sometimes prevent cross-Agency use of systems or data transfers.
- There is a need for better coordination and collaboration between Agencies regarding system development and enhancements.

#### Data Management:

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- Data collection processes at many ports lack consistency, coordination and priority.
- Increased oversight on data quality at all port locations is needed.
- There is a redundancy in databases at the port level that collect similar data.
- There is no established joint Agency database training program.

### Data Analysis:

- There are several data analysis initiatives within CBP and APHIS to analyze data and assess risk but these efforts are not jointly coordinated to leverage the synergy between the efforts.
- Improve understanding of the data that is collected, the databases that compile the data, and the value that can be derived from analysis of the data.
- There is a lack of understanding of how collected data is utilized to assess risk, develop selectivity criteria, develop organizational performance measurements, and support critical staffing needs.

### Overarching Information Management:

There is a need for a joint CBP/APHIS IT strategic planning process.

### **Expected Outcome:**

Success will be realized when:

- Data systems are mutually supported and fully integrated (connectivity and compatibility issues have been resolved).
- Alternatives are established to share data where systems do not exist
- Data systems are accessible and data available.
- Data are collected and reported timely and accurately in accordance with established protocols.
- Standardized data management procedures are established and analysis functions are integrated.
- A joint CBP/APHIS IT Strategic Plan is developed.
- Data entry is streamlined and data use is maximized.
- Training for data collection and use is available and understood at all levels.

### **Implementation Plan:**

#### Tasks

As authorized under the CBP/APHIS Agriculture Inspection (AI) Task Force Charter and upon approval of this implementation action plan, the Task Force will

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convene a Joint Agency Working Group of subject matter specialists to develop a short-term and long-term strategic plan that addresses the IT systems, data management and analysis issues stated in the findings. Subject matter specialists will consist of employees within the respective organizations that have in-depth knowledge of information system development, information management, and/or data analysis. Additionally, the subject matter specialists will include members of existing joint work groups charged with monitoring and/or evaluating the agriculture quarantine and inspection program (e.g., DATER, JAQAP).

Members of the Working Group will be assigned within 30 days of approval of this Action Plan. The short-term plan will be completed within 90 days of approval of this action plan that identifies short-term improvements to information management. The long-term strategic plan will be completed within 180 days after approval of this action plan and with identified milestones and measures. Two Task Force members, one CBP and one APHIS, will be part of the working group and will share responsibility for directing the Working Group and reporting to designated Agency heads.

The Working Group will:

- Identify all units within the respective organizations that are responsible or play a significant role in information system development, and/or data management and analysis.
- Consult with these units as well as solicit information from operational entities to identify all issues regarding information systems and data management and analysis, in relation to the Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Program. The Working Group will ensure all pathways are represented.
- Catalog key issues and outline those issues that can be resolved in the short term (3 months), both technologically and organizationally, and those that will need to be included in a longer-term strategic plan.
- Ensure that in addition to recommended short-term technology solutions, the short-term plan will include recommendations for organizational integrations to enhance the data management and analysis process.
- Obtain necessary approval and implement short-term plan.
- Develop a strategic plan that addresses the longer-term issues.
- Monitor short-term plan and strategic plan accomplishments.
- Develop a data specific training plan.

### Communications Needs

CBP and APHIS will communicate the goals of the aforementioned plan

### Accountable Individual/Group

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Ultimately, the CBP/APHIS Task Force will be responsible for oversight, assuring that the working group completes the short-term plan and long-term strategic plan on schedule. Day-to-day operations and completion of identified goals will be the responsibility of the two designated task force members.

### Resources

The Working Group will consist of an equal number of members from CBP and APHIS. Two Task Force members, one from each organization, will also participate. Any travel expenses incurred by Work Group Members for activities prescribed by this Action Plan will be paid by the respective Agency unit. Resources for full implementation of the plan are dependent on the findings of the Work Group and will be outlined in both the short-term and long-term plans.

There must be a commitment to provide and empower the resources needed to complete the action plan.

### Sequencing / Linkages

- Planning Action Plan
- Training Action Plan
- Structure/Leadership Action Plan
- Resources Action Plan

### Challenges to Implementation

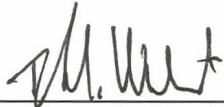
- Availability of key players for the working group and other work priorities.
- Dedication of resources (persons, financial, etc.) for a short-term, intense period of completion of the Working Group charge(s).

The Work Group will need to complete its full assessment before any actions can be taken.

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

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



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