

Plant Pest Identification Notifications to State Departments of Agriculture
March 21, 2008
Amended April 5, 2010*

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 Services (NIS) staff. This communication protocol applies to 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 that may include 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 a *positive confirmation, negative determination, or inconclusive result* of pest identification. 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 or significant pest detection, and (2) if not, is there a management/eradication program already underway in the United States?

* PPQ Diagnostic Notification to States v6.pdf
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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 submissions, presumptive identifications, and identification confirmations, 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 individuals 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).

Please note that the information contained in these notifications is confidential, for your information only, and should not be shared with or forwarded to those outside of the affected state.

TABLE 1: Subject Heading and Distribution for Pest Identification and Diagnostic Results

| 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: |
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| <p>Not new to the U.S.</p> | Pending | <p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PPQ National Program Manager ▪ PPQ Regional Program Manager ▪ PPQ Senior Regional Program Manager ▪ SPHD of affected state ▪ SPRO of affected state <p>CC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NSPL (CPHST) for plant pathogens / weeds or NSPL (CPHST) for invertebrates / biocontrol ▪ CPHST Director ▪ NIS Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator | <p>SUSPECT FWD: genus, species (common name or abbreviation) from (state two-letter code). In body of the message, say: "This is not a confirmed identification, but a suspect sample is being evaluated."</p> |
| | Confirmed | <p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PPQ National Program Manager ▪ PPQ Regional Program Manager ▪ PPQ Senior Regional Program Manager ▪ SPHD of affected state ▪ SPRO of affected state <p>CC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NSPL (CPHST) for plant pathogens / weeds or NSPL (CPHST) for invertebrates / biocontrol ▪ CPHST Director ▪ NIS Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator | <p>CONFIRMED ID / CONFIRMED NEGATIVE / INCONCLUSIVE: 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>New to US</p> <p>or</p> <p>Not new to the US, but a significant detection in a new state*</p> | Pending | <p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EDP Emergency Preparedness Coordinator or PPQ National Program Manager ▪ PPQ Regional Program Manager ▪ PPQ Senior Regional Program Manager ▪ SPHD of affected state ▪ SPRO of affected state <p>CC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NSPL (CPHST) for plant pathogens/ weeds or NSPL (CPHST) for invertebrates / biocontrol ▪ CPHST NSPL Response and Recovery ▪ PPQ Leadership Team ▪ PHP Board of Directors ▪ EDP Outreach & Communications ▪ LPA Public Affairs Director ▪ NPB President ▪ NPAG ▪ NIS Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator ▪ OPIP Coordinator | <p>SUSPECT FWD: genus, species (common name or abbreviation) from (state two-letter code). In body of the message, say: "This is not a confirmed identification, but a suspect sample is being evaluated."</p> |

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| <p>New to US</p> <p>or</p> <p>Not new to the US, but a significant detection in a new state*</p> | <p>Confirmed</p> | <p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EDP Emergency Preparedness Coordinator or PPQ National Program Manager ▪ PPQ Regional Program Manager ▪ PPQ Senior Regional Program Manager ▪ SPHD of affected state ▪ SPRO of affected state <p>CC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NSPL (CPHST) for plant pathogens/ weeds or NSPL (CPHST) for invertebrates / biocontrol ▪ CPHST NSPL Response and Recovery ▪ PPQ Leadership Team ▪ PHP Board of Directors ▪ EDP Outreach & Communication ▪ LPA Public Affairs Director ▪ NPB President ▪ NPAG ▪ NIS Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator ▪ OPIP Coordinator | <p>CONFIRMED ID / CONFIRMED NEGATIVE / INCONCLUSIVE: 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> |
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*Certain pests, when first detected, have potentially significant impacts on trade. Accordingly, suspect samples pending confirmation and final positive confirmation may be handled at very high administrative levels. Communication under these circumstances is held at extremely high confidence and further communication may not be allowed unless the recipient of the message is authorized to do so.