

# Road Map to 2015: A Strategic Plan for Plant Protection & Quarantine



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## Message from the Deputy Administrator



Dear Colleagues and Stakeholders:

I am pleased to present Plant Protection and Quarantine's Road Map to 2015, the plan that sets PPQ's strategic direction for the next four years. The challenges to ensuring and protecting the health of America's plant and natural resources are complex and enormous. This plan guides the Agency in addressing critical challenges so that PPQ can perform its mission effectively.

Yankton Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs, one of our stakeholders and Federal partners in South Dakota, provided the following comment on our *Road Map to 2015*:

*The burden to control potential invasive species lies with human beings and their ability to study, analyze and research a particular invasive species. It is also the responsibility of the human beings to develop a strategy to eliminate or to deter explosive populations of these invasive species.*

*All agencies including county, state, tribal and federal entities are responsible for the protection of natural resources from the multiple invasive species invading the North American continent. Hopefully, through a combined effort and the efficient use of limited resources, an economical, sustainable solution can be developed to reduce the chance of invasive species destroying naturally occurring ecosystems.*

Well said. I am privileged to lead a dedicated and highly talented workforce in PPQ, and I am honored to lead PPQ's partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders. I am confident that, working together, we will meet the challenges that we face while protection America's agriculture and natural resources.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Bech  
Deputy Administrator  
Plant Protection and Quarantine



# Plant Protection and Quarantine Strategic Plan 2010-2015

## INTRODUCTION

This plan is the product of a comprehensive analysis by Plant Protection and Quarantine's (PPQ) leadership teams of the changing patterns and emerging trends in the agriculture industry, global trade, and the political, economic, scientific, and technological arenas. As part of this analysis, the leadership teams examined potential threats to PPQ's ability to achieve its mission over the next 5 years, as well as opportunities to enhance that ability. The team also identified PPQ's internal strengths and weaknesses and assessed the current initiatives that will help the program meet tomorrow's global challenges.

After completing its analysis, the leadership teams developed strategic goals, objectives, and actionable strategies to leverage the opportunities, counter the threats, exploit PPQ's strengths, and shore up the weaknesses. The team also invited feedback from PPQ employees before sharing the plan with key stakeholder groups, the National Plant Board and industry organizations. When the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Strategic Plans 2010-2015 became available, the strategic goals and management initiatives were incorporated into the PPQ plan to ensure alignment.

In addition, the strategic plan incorporates a set of key recommendations from PPQ's Plant Health Strategies Task Force (PHSTF). In 2008, PPQ's Deputy Administrator commissioned the PHSTF, which was comprised of employees representing each of PPQ's major units. The PHSTF was asked to reach beyond the range of PPQ's expertise and experience, examine the challenges PPQ faces, and make specific recommendations to build a sustainable future for PPQ.

The task force concluded that there is growing concern within PPQ and among its stakeholders that the U.S. plant health safeguarding system may not be adequate to meet the emerging challenges and expectations of Congress, industry, and the American public. Over the past 5 years introductions of plant pests and diseases are occurring with increasing frequency. Section 10201 (Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention) of the 2008 Farm

Bill charges PPQ to detect pests earlier and respond more effectively. However, PPQ currently lacks the tools to adequately contain or eradicate many of these new introductions. Changes in public attitudes toward traditional pest management techniques also affect the program's ability to respond appropriately. PPQ's State cooperators face similar challenges, along with dwindling budgets. In these circumstances, PPQ has, at times, found itself embarking on cooperative pest management or eradication programs only to find that the necessary ingredients are not present to meet expectations. In some cases, PPQ has entered into long-term program commitments with no clear exit strategy, which leaves PPQ's resources stretched thin as it launches response efforts to newly introduced pests.

The task force's recommendations are designed to address these concerns. The PPQ Leadership Team adopted many of them and incorporated them as the top priority strategies under the appropriate strategic goals in this plan. See *Appendix A* for the PPQ Leadership Team's detailed response to the PHSTF report.

At the same time, this plan builds on the existing strengths of the organization, such as, the Officers at PPQ's Plant Inspection Stations (PIS) at Ports of Entry (POE), PPQ's cadre of expert Identifiers and diagnostic laboratories, and other significant pest exclusion activities conducted within the U.S. and offshore, such as the Preclearance program, the Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative (GCSI), and the Offshore Pest Information Program (OPIP).

Please note that any reference to plant pests in this document conforms to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) definition of plant pests as any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products.

### PPQ MISSION

APHIS-PPQ safeguards agriculture and natural resources from the entry, establishment, and spread of animal and plant pests and noxious weeds into the United States of America; and supports trade and exports of U.S. agricultural products.



## PPQ VISION

Plant Protection and Quarantine, as the world's leading Plant Protection Organization, is recognized for its:

- *Leadership in scientific expertise, application of innovative technologies and operational best practices;*
- *Excellence and timely collaborative approaches with its national and international stakeholders;*
- *Appropriate responsive engagement with a well informed public;*
- *Demonstrated valuable contribution to the preservation of a healthy global environment;*
- *Inclusive high performing organization driven by its diverse and dedicated workforce that shares responsibility and leadership for accomplishing PPQ's mission with the highest standards of excellence...*

in ensuring sustainable agricultural practices and an abundant, high-quality and varied food supply that strengthens the marketability of U.S. agriculture in domestic and international commerce. PPQ's meaningful and measureable investments in its employees make PPQ a model employer of choice.

## PPQ VALUES/GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Can-do Mind Set/Flexibility:** We embrace new challenges in changing conditions to find solutions.

**Excellence & Achievement:** We are committed to an enduring legacy of excellence and continually improving our performance.

**Collaboration & Partnership:** We believe we are stronger for our interactive partnerships than we are by ourselves and welcome the perspective

and insights of all who take an interest in or are affected by our work and through our outreach efforts.

**Clear & Balanced Decisionmaking:** We consider the best available science resulting from a thorough analysis of information when making decisions, while taking into account the importance of other factors.

**Communication:** We are committed to clear and open communications and encourage the healthy exchange of ideas and information. We believe that employees are better equipped to support the mission when they have the information they need.

**Accountability & Integrity:** We accept responsibility for our actions as individuals and as an Agency of the Federal Government. We are dependable and seek to act as good stewards of the resources provided.

**Valuing PPQ employees:** We are dedicated to creating and sustaining a diverse workforce and positive work environment, valuing all employees, instilling in them a sense of true belonging, and equipping them to provide fair and impartial program delivery.

## Organizational Structure

PPQ employs 2500 permanent and over 1000 short-term employees; the Agency's headquarters are located in Riverdale, Maryland and Washington, D.C. PPQ has two major program units (Plant Health Programs [PHP] and Emergency and Domestic Programs [EDP]), a Center for Plant Health Science and Technology in Raleigh, North Carolina, two regional offices located in Raleigh, North Carolina and Ft Collins, Colorado and PPQ's Professional Development Center, located in Frederick, Maryland. More information on PPQ's organizational structure and functions are available on its website: [http://aphis.usda.gov/plant\\_health\\_orgcharts.shtml](http://aphis.usda.gov/plant_health_orgcharts.shtml). Other useful information, including the Federal statutes and regulations under which PPQ operates, as well as news and information regarding PPQ's programs is available on the following website: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant\\_health/index.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/index.shtml)

## STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

The Plan is divided into four major sections:

**Section I** includes the introduction and provides an overview of the strategic goals and objectives in the plan.

**Section II** provides more detailed information for each set of Goals and Management Initiatives:

- ❖ *Background Information*: a brief discussion of the emerging issues and trends that led to the development of the Goals and Objectives;
- ❖ *Actionable Strategies*: The needed actions that will be pursued to achieve the Strategic Goals, Objectives and Management Initiatives;
- ❖ *Performance Measures*: the measureable indicators that demonstrate achievement of the Program Goals and are linked to PPQ's budget.  
*Note*: the Overarching Goals and Management Initiatives do not have performance measures.

**Section III** shows how each PPQ Strategic goals and Management Initiatives align with USDA's and APHIS Strategic Goals.

**Section IV** contains the Appendices of supporting documents.



## SECTION I

### OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC GOALS

The Strategic Goals in this Strategic Plan are organized around three major focus areas as follows:

- I. **Overarching/Cross-cutting Goals** includes three high priority goals that cut across and touch every PPQ program activity and are critical to PPQ's long-term future success.
- II. **Program-Oriented Strategic Goals** is comprised of four mission oriented goals focused on the full range of PPQ's safeguarding activities: pest exclusion and prevention; pest detection; emergency preparedness, response and recovery and ongoing pest-specific programs.
- III. **Management Initiatives** encompass the activities aimed at strengthening PPQ's internal capacity to successfully carry out its mission in the face of the emerging issues and threats in the world.

#### I. Overarching/Cross-cutting Goals

The overarching strategic goals focus on three elements that PPQ's Leadership Team identified as essential to the program's success over the next 5 years: public outreach, partnership building, and cutting-edge scientific and technological expertise. These goals will help to ensure that these three elements are as strong and effective as possible in the years ahead. By improving each of these areas, PPQ will also enhance its credibility with its stakeholders, including Congress, the general public, and industry.

**Overarching Goal 1: Strengthen Outreach:** Conduct outreach and education to increase the exchange with the public and stakeholders to enhance their understanding, acceptance, and support of PPQ's mission while taking into account their input and feedback into the plans and actions that the agency pursues.

##### Objectives:

- 1.1. Expand proactive legislative and inter-governmental outreach and the systematic engagement of stakeholders and citizens in decision-making and consensus-building forums in an effort to

increase public understanding, acceptance, and support of PPQ's pest exclusion activities and plant pest and disease management efforts.

- 1.2 Encourage and train public and stakeholder groups to participate in pest surveillance and detection activities through formal volunteer programs and expanded use of the plant protection and regulatory studies curriculum in the land grant university system and other educational institutions.
- 1.3 Develop and implement a national, multi-year public awareness campaign about the threat invasive species pose to agriculture and the environment in an effort to increase the likelihood that the public will adopt behaviors to help mitigate the introduction or spread of exotic pests and diseases.

**Overarching Goal 2: Strengthen Partnerships:** Expand and build partnerships and coalitions with PPQ's traditional and non-traditional local, State, Tribal, Federal and international stakeholders and partners in carrying out the PPQ mission.

**Objectives:**

- 2.1 Continue to build the relationship with the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection (DHS, CBP) to address issues of mutual interest and concern related to our shared mission responsibilities.
- 2.2 Expand and strengthen the network and activities with traditional and non-traditional local, State, Tribal, Federal, industry, non- governmental organizations (NGO) and international partners through enhanced communication and collaboration.
- 2.3 Build and strengthen strategic alliances among the federal and state agencies responsible for responding to new pest outbreaks.
- 2.4 Enhance communications with the scientific community and stakeholders, such as representatives of agricultural commodities and land managers, to ensure sufficient safe biological control agents are available to manage plant pests.

**Overarching Goal 3: Enhance Science and Technology:** Enhance PPQ's science and technology foundation, to fully support PPQ's policy and regulatory decision making and operations and to maintain PPQ's international leadership in plant health issues.

**Objectives:**

- 3.1: Provide the best science and technology to PPQ pest exclusion, emergency and domestic programs to support long-term,

- economically and environmentally sustainable agricultural systems and natural plant communities.
- 3.2: Maintain and enhance PPQ as a leader in international phytosanitary policy setting.
  - 3.3: Ensure the impacts of climate change are included in predictive models, scientific analyses and technology solutions.
  - 3.4: Develop analytical models to predict biosecurity threats and to assess the value of different pest exclusion/prevention and control options.

## II. Strategic Program Goals

**Program Goal 1:** Optimize the effectiveness of PPQ's *Pest Exclusion/Prevention* activities.

### Objectives:

- 1.1: Address the pest risks associated with the importation of agriculture commodities, plants for planting and research materials.
- 1.2: Ensure all pest exclusion/prevention activities address the highest risk pathways
- 1.3: Ensure all pest exclusion/prevention activities address the highest risk at Ports of Entry (POE) and Plant Inspection Stations (PIS)
- 1.4: Expand and enhance offshore pest exclusion activities, including Preclearance, North American Perimeter Approach, Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative and Pacific Safeguarding Initiative.
- 1.5: Ensure competitiveness of specialty crop and small producers in the global marketplace
- 1.6: Overcome phytosanitary barriers to strengthen U.S. access to global marketplace in support of the National Export Initiative (NEI).

**Program Goal 2:** Enhance PPQ's capacity to detect the presence of new exotic potential plant health pest or invasive plant threats as early as possible so that an appropriate and timely response can be launched.

### Objectives:

- 2.1: Enhance plant pest/disease data collection and analysis to deploy resources efficiently to detect pests as early as possible.
- 2.2: Target domestic inspection activities at vulnerable points in the safeguarding continuum resulting from the movement of products potentially carrying pests of regulatory significance.

- 2.3: Strengthen survey procedures and tools to improve PPQ's capacity to rapidly detect and accurately identify pests of regulatory significance.
- 2.4: Enhance the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program to better involve and serve stakeholders.

**Program Goal 3:** Enhance PPQ's capacity to strategically *prepare* for, respond to and assist in the recovery from to plant health emergencies.

Objectives:

- 3.1: Ensure emergency preparedness planning and activities are strategically targeted and proactively implemented.
- 3.2: Ensure effective and timely emergency response to plant health emergencies.
- 3.3: Ensure sound long term sustainable strategies are incorporated into crop production practices in the recovery phase of a plant health emergency.

**Program Goal 4:** Ensure PPQ's portfolio of programs is the most effective, efficient, strategic and relevant in the face of emerging and ongoing exotic pest and invasive plant threats and the impacts from the changing climate.

Objectives:

- 4.1. Ensure PPQ programs are routinely evaluated to confirm continued strategic relevance and to determine the nature of PPQ's continuing role and deployment of resources.
- 4.2. Ensure the effective and efficient operation of Domestic Programs
- 4.3. Ensure realistic final outcomes and/or end-points are clearly defined when establishing new pest-specific programs along with plans for transitioning the program activities to other entities once those outcomes are achieved or the pre-defined end-point has been reached.

### III. Management Initiatives

**Management Initiative 1:** Improve the quality, metrics, communication and implementation of the decisions made in PPQ

**Management Initiative 2:** Achieve the vision for PPQ to become the employer of choice as "*a recognized leader dedicated to creating and sustaining a diverse workforce and positive work environment, valuing all employees and instilling in them a sense of true belonging as they provide fair and impartial program delivery.*"

**Management Initiative 3:** Build the capacity of PPQ's workforce to successfully meet current and future program challenges



**Management Initiative 4:** Streamline PPQ's Administrative and Program work processes to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of PPQ's program functions and operations.

**Management Initiative 5:** Ensure PPQ's Information Technology (IT) data systems are fully integrated with its business processes and optimize the accessibility and accuracy of information that PPQ employees need to perform their jobs.

**Management Initiative 6:** Reduce PPQ's carbon footprint



SECTION II

DETAILED DESCRIPTION  
OF  
STRATEGIC GOALS  
&  
MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

## Overarching/*Cross Cutting* Strategic Goals

The overarching strategic goals focus on three elements that PPQ's management team identified as essential to the program's success over the next 5 years: **public outreach, partnership building, and cutting-edge scientific and technological expertise**. These goals will help to ensure that these three elements are as strong and effective as possible in the years ahead. By improving each of these areas, PPQ will also enhance its credibility with its stakeholders, including Congress, the general public, and industry.

**Overarching Goal 1: Strengthen Outreach:** Conduct outreach and education to increase the exchange with the public and stakeholders to enhance their understanding, acceptance, and support of PPQ's mission while taking into account their input and feedback into the plans and actions that the agency pursues.

### *BACKGROUND*

The growth of the global economy and the public's year-round appetite for a broad range of fruits and vegetables come with a hidden price tag: the cost of detecting and responding to exotic plant pests and diseases newly introduced into the United States. Pathways for these threats include imported commodities and international travelers entering the country. The general public is simply not aware that some foreign fruit, vegetable, and plant products can carry potentially harmful pests and diseases that could, if introduced here, cost millions of dollars in agricultural and environmental damage and subsequent eradication efforts. Some of these invasive species can threaten entire crops, nursery stock, and tree species.

PPQ and its state counterparts have long recognized the need to educate members of the public and raise their awareness of invasive species issues. PPQ's long-term goal is to influence the public's behavior to act responsibly as international travelers and to better understand the importance and rationale of the program's regulatory response to the detection of an exotic plant pest. Additionally, PPQ seeks to encourage the public to be on the lookout for exotic pests that do arrive in the United States. Significant finds have been made in this manner; a woman reported the first detection of Asian longhorned beetle in the Massachusetts when she discovered it in her back yard, and a Berkeley, California, professor reported the first detection of light brown apple moth in the United States.

In meeting this goal, PPQ will apply lessons learned from past emergency response programs. These lessons have highlighted the need to increase the PPQ's understanding and application of the social sciences to not only expand the public's knowledge and awareness of exotic pest threats but to actively engage with the public to better address their concerns in PPQ's response strategies. As a scientific organization, we need to learn how to inform the public of the facts while telling a compelling story that captures their imagination and addresses their interests. In our communication efforts, we will ensure that we reach out to all of our stakeholders, particularly non-traditional ones such as nongovernmental organizations (e.g., the National Audubon Society and Nature Conservancy), firewood and handicraft retailers, corporate sustainability managers, and many others. Most importantly, we will demonstrate that we are actively listening to these individuals and groups and are carefully considering their interests and needs in the actions we take.

To support these initiatives, PPQ seeks to incorporate new, Web-based communication tools into its outreach and education activities. Additionally, PPQ will train its employees at all levels of the organization who routinely communicate with the public and stakeholders—to convey carefully crafted, easily understandable, and consistent messages. APHIS' Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) program will support PPQ in all of these outreach and education efforts, and LPA will incorporate them into its strategic communications plan for PPQ.

## *Objectives & Actionable Strategies*

*Overarching Objective 1.1:* Expand proactive legislative and inter-governmental outreach and the systematic engagement of stakeholders and citizens in decision-making and consensus-building forums in an effort to increase public understanding, acceptance, and support of PPQ' pest exclusion activities and plant pest and disease management efforts.

### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Identify affected or at-risk areas to target efforts to systematically engage citizens in public decision-making and consensus-building forums in an effort to educate the public about pest issues and seek public and stakeholder input when developing regulatory policy and program delivery strategies.
2. Increase the availability and accessibility of information on pests of significance in a variety of venues, including social media sites.
3. Identify members of Congress and elected officials to expand outreach efforts to educate delegations from affected or at-risk areas about the environmental and economic impacts

(actual/potential) of pests of regulatory significance and the efforts to prevent, eradicate, or control them.

4. Strengthen NGO and industry engagement and early involvement in PPQ's mission related activities.

*Overarching Objective 1.2:* Encourage and train public and stakeholder groups to participate in pest surveillance and detection activities through formal volunteer programs and expanded use of the plant protection and regulatory studies curriculum in the land grant university system and other educational institutions.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Educate PPQ employees on the social science principles that can be incorporated into outreach efforts to influence the public's behavior to become active supporters of invasive species activities.
2. Work with State Plant Health Directors, the Extension Service and NGO's **to build on existing** or establish formal volunteer programs which would provide training and mechanisms for reporting findings.
3. Continue to build on the current regulatory studies curriculum in the land grant university system and other educational institutions and promote the volunteer survey initiatives.

*Overarching Objective 1.3:* Develop and implement a national, multi-year public awareness campaign about the threat invasive species pose to agriculture and the environment in an effort to increase the likelihood that the public will adopt behaviors to help mitigate the introduction or spread of exotic pests and diseases.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Develop clear and precise message that all PPQ employees can use to educate and raise the public's general awareness of invasive species issues and PPQ's mission.
2. Expand the use of the latest social media communication tools, technology, and strategies in the Web 2.0 environment to engage the public and key stakeholders.
3. Align PPQ's local or targeted and/or pest specific outreach efforts to reinforce the overall outreach strategy.
4. Establish an effective mechanism to listen and take into account stakeholder and the public's interests and concerns.
5. Ensure the agency's outreach efforts effectively connect American agriculture and the relevance of the agency's mission to consumers.
6. Build PPQ employee capacity to have a strong situational awareness to effectively engage stakeholders and the public in

policy development and communication. (*Also see Management Initiative 3*)

7. Provide tools and messages to and encourage PPQ employees to share PPQ messages with their personal networks.
8. Explore ways to build on emerging “green” education efforts in the school systems to convey PPQ’s message re: invasive species.
9. Expand on outreach efforts for international traveling passengers and importers with magazine inserts, pamphlets, etc. (*Note: this activity supports Program Goal 1 on Pest Exclusion*)
10. Enhance Veterinary Regulatory Services’ (VRS) risk communication activities with internal and external stakeholders and customers, including increasing the public’s awareness of foreign animal disease exclusion issues and the importance of safeguarding regulated international garbage.
11. Explore publishing an annual national report on Plant Health in the U.S. similar to APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) annual report on animal health in the U.S.

([http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/animal\\_health\\_report/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_health_report/))

12. Identify successful comparable government sponsored public information campaigns conducted by other countries, e.g., Canada and Australia, to learn and apply these best practices to our own campaigns.

**Overarching Goal 2: Expand and build partnerships and coalitions with PPQ’s traditional and non-traditional local, State, Tribal, Federal and international partners\* in carrying out the PPQ mission.**

\*State Plant Regulatory Officials (SPROs)/National Plant Board (NPB), State Departments of Forestry, Natural Resources, County, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), Department of Homeland Security/Customs & Border Protection (DHS/CBP), Forest Service (FS), Agriculture Research Service (ARS), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Cooperative Extension Service, Economic Research Service (ERS), Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Fish & Wildlife, Department of Interior (DOI), Department of Defense (DOD), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), foreign National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs), universities and others)

### **BACKGROUND**

PPQ cannot accomplish its mission by acting alone. The program relies on a strong collaborative partnership with numerous Federal, State, Tribal, industry,

academic, and foreign entities to develop and implement scientifically sound approaches to pest exclusion, detection, surveillance, and management or eradication. By capitalizing on its existing pest detection program and surveillance system, PPQ will work to establish an unprecedented level of communication and coordination with its cooperators.

At the Federal level, PPQ is forging stronger partnerships with USDA's Forest Service. Given the complexities of many of the new pest introductions generate, other Federal entities, such as USDA's National Institute Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and Risk Management Agency (RMA), as well as the Department of Interior (DOI) and Department of Defense (DOD), need to become part of PPQ's ever-growing coalition of responders. Additionally, with each new pest PPQ encounters, new and different stakeholders and industries emerge. PPQ must be able to quickly identify and engage them to ensure that their interests and needs are not unnecessarily compromised by the program's regulatory response.

APHIS' State plant health regulatory counterparts and departments of agriculture fully appreciate what it takes to eradicate, suppress, or manage a pest outbreak, as they are our partners in carrying out emergency response programs. However, many States are facing severe budget cuts as a result of the U.S. economy's recent downturn. This situation puts additional pressure on PPQ to compensate for the loss of State resources traditionally used to conduct pest surveys and respond to plant health emergencies. While these partners actively support survey activities to detect pests of national importance, they also want flexibility in determining how to use Federal funds provided through Section 10201 of the 2008 Farm Bill. In particular, the States have expressed the need to use these funds to support their efforts not just to discover new pests as part of the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) program, but to prepare for the potential introduction of certain pests, and rapidly and effectively respond when new pest introductions are detected.

In recent years, with the increased incursions of exotic forest pests, PPQ has realized the importance of expanding its network of partners to include State departments of forestry and natural resources. Outside of government, expanded and enhanced partnerships with plant industries and academia have created new opportunities for information sharing and coordinated pest and disease detection and reporting activities. Clearly, PPQ's partnerships with a wide range of cooperators will be essential to the success of all the strategies and objectives described in this plan.

Expanded and enhanced partnerships with plant industries (nursery, arborists, botanical gardens, pest control operators) and academia has created new opportunities for information sharing and coordinated pest and disease detection and reporting activities. Collaboration and cooperation, based on



well-established partnerships between plant industries, state officials, academia, and PPQ, remains the catalyst for continued success.

## *Objectives & Actionable Strategies*

*Overarching Objective 2.1:* Continue to build the relationship with the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection (DHS,CBP) to address issues of mutual interest and concern related to our shared mission responsibilities.

### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Complete and implement the outstanding joint action plan items of the Joint agency-CBP-PPQ Task Force and implement the Joint Task Force Agency Strategic and Operations Plan.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the current mechanisms designed to strengthen the CBP-PPQ partnership and chart the direction for future.
3. Encourage State Plant Health Directors (SPHD), State Plant Regulatory Officials (SPRO), Officers-in-Charge (OIC), Pest Survey Specialists (PSS), Identifiers, Smuggling Interdiction and Trade Compliance (SITC) Officers, Veterinary Medical Officers (VMO), and Investigative and Enforcement Services (IES) to participate in Pest Risk Committees in primary and secondary Ports of Entry and expand the array of strategies Pest Risk Committees consider and develop; assessing information available through PPQ's Agriculture Risk Management (ARM) database regarding pest issues occurring at the local level to see the linkage to national issues.
4. Enhance PPQ's capacity to conduct risk and trend analyses to support the Pest Risk Committees to better identify high risk pathways and provide feedback to CBP re: inspectional productivity and increase security of high risk pathways.
5. Complete the installation of Agriculture Risk Management (ARM) database to become the major interface with the International Trade Data System (ITDS) to enhance agriculture port of entry (POE) information management and to better support PPQ's analysis of risk and CBP's inspectional performance at ports of entry.
6. Enhance intelligence sharing of off-shore bio-surveillance information, patterns of non-compliance and domestic first detection reporting among Smuggling Interdiction and Trace Compliance (SITC), and CBP and other PPQ programs.
7. Re-evaluate and explore ways to strengthen PPQ's phytosanitary regulatory framework, particularly in regards to imported wood packing material, and work with CBP to refine and utilize available enforcement tools.

*Overarching Objective 2.2:* Expand and strengthen the network and activities with traditional and non-traditional local, State, Tribal, Federal, industry, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and international partners through enhanced communication and collaboration.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Pursue the formation of multi-agency working groups at local, state, and federal level to combine resources to accomplish tasks addressing issues of mutual concern and interests thereby minimizing duplication of effort. <sup>1</sup>
2. Encourage SPHDs to attend quarterly Food and Agriculture Council (FAC), State Emergency Board (SEB) and outreach council meetings to enhance PPQ's interactions with other USDA agencies operating at the state level.
3. Collaborate with APHIS Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) on establishing tool kit for starting multi-agency, multi-level groups.
4. Encourage sharing of information networks at all levels of the organization, including the messages being shared with external partners.
5. Expand efforts to reach out and partner with Native American tribes in advance of the emergence of specific pest issues in addition to addressing specific pest issues.
6. Encourage LPA to work with corporations and NGO's to send out PPQ's messages through their network and to tap into their green outreach efforts.
7. Collaborate with LPA to develop a communication package and tools for SPHDs to build partnerships with NGOs and establish goals for SPHDs to make contact with NGO's and others to build coalitions within their jurisdiction.
8. Look for opportunities to establish cooperative agreements to accomplish tasks, such as, outreach activities with non-traditional partners, tribes, NGO's and others.
9. Identify opportunities and explore ways to partner with APHIS Veterinary Services to leverage knowledge and expertise to address similar challenges each program faces, e.g., emergency response mechanisms.

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of such efforts include: (1) multi-agency working groups initially formed at the state level to address a specific pest issues and overtime expanded the focus to address other issues. (2) PPQ has established a collaborative partnership with the Forest Service and the Northeast Pest Outreach Project to develop a *P. ramorum* operational framework. This initiative brought together agriculture and forestry officials at the State and Federal level and provided a forum to coordinate and maximize resources for forest pest outreach and early detection efforts.

10. Seek out opportunities to engage Native American expertise in addressing plant pest management issues.

*Overarching Objective 2.3:* Build and strengthen strategic alliances among the federal and state agencies responsible for responding to new pest outbreaks.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Strengthen partnership with the Forest Service (FS) and other cooperators to ensure National Forests and private working lands maintain good plant health and made more resilient to climate change.
2. Expand active involvement in key USDA Advisory Committees and Federal interagency committees such as FAS Agriculture Advisory Committee, the National Invasive Species Council (NISC), Federal Interagency Committee on Invasive Terrestrial Animals and Pathogens and other invasive species groups.
3. Continue to work with CBP to obtain membership or representation of the producer community on the DHS/CBP Commercial Operations Advisory Committee (COAC).
4. Gain endorsement from DHS and APHIS for the joint agency emergency response plan and roll out final version to the field staff in both agencies.
5. Continue to build partnership with all federal agencies that share missions for natural resource protection and preservation, e.g., NIFA, FS, DOI, Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Land Management, on specific pest issues and high risk pathways.
6. Identify and build on relationships with other federal agencies working on specific pest issues to engage in (FS, other USDA research agencies) to engage in a more general response planning.
7. Strengthen relationship with National Plant Disease Recovery System led by ARS in the development of New Pest Response Guidelines.
8. Maintain and build relationships with the APHIS Emergency Management Safety and Security Division (EMSSD), other APHIS Emergency Response groups and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure coordinated ESF-11, all hazard activities.
9. Ensure APHIS administrative procedures provide for easy sharing of state and federal resources during emergency response programs.

**Overarching Objective 2.4:** Enhance communications with the scientific community and stakeholders, such as representatives of agricultural commodities and land managers, to ensure sufficient safe biological control agents are available to manage plant pests.

**Actionable Strategies:**

1. Work with partners concerned with invasive species to establish a prioritized list of species that include high-risk pests already in the country but for which no biological control program exist to determine which would be good candidates for biological control that can be communicated to the research community to pursue.
2. Work with the scientific community either directly or indirectly through the Technical Advisory Group for Biological Control of Weeds (TAG) to educate the research community to cause no harm to plants of agriculture and ecosystems with the release of biological control agents beyond the targeted invasive species.
3. Ensure feedback and input is solicited from the broad spectrum of all stakeholders potentially impacted by the approved release of a biological control agent prior to release.

**Overarching Goal 3: Enhance PPQ's *Science and Technology* foundation, to fully support PPQ's policy and regulatory decision making and operations and to maintain PPQ's international leadership in plant health issues.**

**BACKGROUND**

PPQ accomplishes its mission through the application of scientific knowledge of plant pests and diseases. It is therefore essential that PPQ maintain the highest level of scientific and technical expertise in these areas. PPQ's Center for Plant Health Science and Technology (CPHST) is responsible for ensuring that PPQ has the information, tools, and technology to make the most scientifically valid regulatory and policy decisions possible. CPHST also ensures that PPQ's operations have the most scientifically viable and practical tools to detect, diagnose and respond to pests in complex field conditions.

Because so little may be known at the time of an initial detection of exotic pests, often scientists cannot quickly provide detection tools for delimiting the outbreak or tools for managing the pest. Developing these tools may require years of research and testing. Assessment of the likely damage can often be severely limited by the lack of information regarding the pest's potential host range and ability to move to new areas - through either natural means or human-assisted pathways. In the years ahead, PPQ must gain and apply the

scientific expertise required to accurately calculate which foreign pests and diseases will most likely pose the highest risk to the United States. In this regard, it is most useful for PPQ scientists and technical experts to travel to the countries where these threats exist to conduct research on the biology and population dynamics of the pests and their distribution pathways. Based on the knowledge gained, PPQ can more effectively prepare for their potential introduction into the United States with the appropriate survey methods and control technologies, including potential bio-control agents, in advance of the invasion. The collaborative efforts with the scientific community throughout the world help to build good will with foreign counterparts who PPQ can call upon for assistance, when it is needed.

By both maintaining and asserting leadership through its scientific expertise and standing on plant health regulatory issues, PPQ can leverage American influence on phytosanitary issues in the global economy. This is particularly important given a number of recent trends that could threaten the standing of the United States in the world, such as China's growing economic power. To help maintain the United States' stature in the international arena, PPQ needs to continue—or even expand—its active participation in international plant health and trade organizations such as the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), World Trade Organization, and others. Additionally, PPQ must take a more active role in proposing innovative regulatory approaches and in collaborating with our trading partners throughout the world to address our mutual interests in protecting our respective plant, animal and natural resources.

### *Objectives & Actionable Strategies*

*Overarching Objective 3.1:* Provide the best science and technology to PPQ pest exclusion, emergency and domestic programs to support long-term, economically and environmentally sustainable agricultural systems and natural plant communities.

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Adopt protocols to identify and prioritize the agency's needs for new technology and methods.
2. Build on the Citrus Health Response Program (CHRP) model for establishing commodity-based and natural resources coordinating groups that include PPQ, industry and/or other government agencies (e.g., ARS, NIFA, FS) to conduct and/or coordinate research and voluntary industry efforts aimed at the pests affecting the targeted commodity or resource.
3. Reach out to non-traditional scientific communities, such as, Native American tribes, to learn time-tested and sustainable Native scientific solutions, based on traditional ecological knowledge.

4. Increase and enhance technical transfer with hands-on training to build capacity in and outside the organization for effective implementation of new scientific tools and technologies.
5. Gain agency support to dedicate a percentage of resources to maintaining a focus on emerging technological innovations and proofs of concept studies for future use.
6. Find ways to embed and engage CPHST scientists in program operations that are addressing current pest issues.
7. Re-evaluate PPQ's practices that focus on known pest risks to creating practices that consider the multitude of pests that are unknown or uncharacterized.

*Overarching Objective 3.2:* Maintain and enhance PPQ as a leader in international phytosanitary policy setting.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Actively position PPQ scientists and officials to advance the PPQ mission and scientific advancements, in international standard setting bodies and other scientific forum (e.g., IPPC, North American Plant Protection Organization [NAPPO], European Plant Protection Organization [EPPO] and other international standard setting bodies).
2. Provide leadership through the IPPC, World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to promote revision to the existing biosecurity and pathway risk assessment process to: "embrace and integrate tools underpinning both objective and perceived risk using quantitative, bio-economic and sociological research methodologies." (Mumford 2002).
3. Increase and coordinate targeted research with international partners for methods development and validation activities including treatment and diagnostics development, data collection and foreign exploration for biological control agents based on a prioritized list of pests deemed likely to enter the U.S.
4. Contribute to and participate in offshore mitigation activities with neighboring countries, the Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative and Africa from which high risk pests could come, and to gather information about pests so we are better prepared for possible pest incursions before they occur.

*Note: a number of strategies that support this goal are also found in Management Initiatives 1 and 3.*

*Overarching Objective 3.3:* Ensure the impacts of climate change are included in predictive models, scientific analyses and technology solutions.

### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Facilitate and actively support research to find efficacious and acceptable alternatives to Methyl Bromide and organophosphates, some of which may be phased out over the next 5 years to meet environmental regulations and international agreements.
2. Ensure APHIS/PPQ is formally represented on USDA committees and initiatives related to climate change.
3. Participate in the development of agency policy that would include PPQ's contributions and actions to mitigate climate change.
4. Ensure Technical Working Groups and risk assessors' factor in the impacts of climate change (e.g., changes in host range for pests, weather pattern models and analyses, or other information) in their scientific analyses and technology solutions.
5. Develop a USDA Framework Initiative/road map to identify the anticipated impacts of climate change on PPQ activities and the required resources.

*Overarching Objective 3.4:* Develop analytical models to predict biosecurity threats and to assess the value of different pest exclusion/prevention and control options.

### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Develop an analytical model or framework to analyze and interpret offshore surveillance information, global trading patterns and other data collected by the agency and DHS to better identify pests of regulatory significance that present a probable risk of entering the United States.
2. Build a robust cadre of highly trained analysts in PPQ with strong interactive ties with academics, connections with field personnel, supported by statisticians responsible for ensuring proper data collection, management, Quality Control (QC) and statistical analysis.
3. Establish a mechanism to ensure follow-up actions, such as regulatory changes occur as a result of analyses completed.
4. Develop and integrate predictive epidemiological models that incorporate risk and economic analyses and consider the impacts of climate change to better support PPQ's decision-making in response to a new pest introductions.
5. Conduct risk and economic analyses to compare offshore initiatives to current agriculture quarantine inspections at ports of entry, pest detection, and emergency response to help determine how to best allocate PPQ funds.

6. Identify opportunities to work on joint projects with VS scientists such as, joint pathway analyses, Geographic Information System (GIS) projects, economic analyses, sharing methodologies, etc. to foster cross-fertilization of ideas, development of new models and methodological approaches.
7. Establish linkages with the intelligence community, to receive and integrate information to develop more robust response to ever increasing threats posed by invasive forest and agricultural species.

*Note:* This objective supports Strategic Program Goal 1, Overarching Goal 2 and Management Initiative 1.

## Strategic Program Goals

The plan's strategic program goals are designed to meet head-on the growing challenges to PPQ's core functions: pest exclusion and prevention, pest detection, plant health emergency preparedness, response and recovery and ongoing pest specific programs.

### Program Goal 1: Optimize the effectiveness of PPQ's *Pest Exclusion/Prevention* activities

#### **BACKGROUND**

Numerous emerging issues and trends continue to threaten PPQ's pest exclusion and prevention aspect of PPQ's mission over the next 5 years:

- **Increased trade in plants for planting** continues to be the highest risk pathway for exotic pests. PPQ's proposed regulations to address that risk have stalled for many years. PPQ's leadership team hopes that, under the new Administration, this regulatory program will be able to make more headway on this front.
- **Increased importation of fruits and vegetables** will, in turn, increase the associated plant pest risks. Two factors are fueling this trend. Consumer demand for the year-round availability of these commodities continues to rise. In addition, more of our food continues to be grown offshore in Brazil by the U.S. agriculture industry and then imported into the United States.
- PPQ is obligated, as the designated **National Plant Protection Organization** for the United States, to participate in the international community's activities to develop and set international standards that manage the risks



associated with the trade in agricultural products and commodities. As global trade continues to expand, these activities become even more vital to ensure more consistent and safe movement of agriculture products.

- **Internet commerce** remains a significant challenge that PPQ's Smuggling, Interdiction, and Trade Compliance (SITC) unit is actively addressing. SITC must continue to gain a larger foothold in the Internet exchange at the "point of purchase" (e.g., eBay) to educate buyers about plant health risks and regulatory requirements. Because Internet purchases are often sent through **international mail and express carriers**, these pathways require even closer monitoring for pest risks.
- **New or expanded transit routes** introduce new levels of risk. Examples include a new deepwater port in Mexico and the associated new rail route through the heartland of American agriculture, with a transit hub in Kansas City, Kansas. In addition, the reopening of the Panama Canal will bring even larger cargo vessels to East Coast ports of entry.
- **Country-of-origin issues** challenge our current open border policies with Canada whenever products from other countries enter the United States via Canadian rail. While these products do not pose a risk to Canada, they may carry possible introductions of new pests that could be of concern to American agriculture and natural resources.
- **Immigration rates (legal or otherwise) could increase** because of rising instability in the world due to the increasing scarcity of food and water resources. These new immigrants desiring foods from their native lands often contribute to increases in non-compliant imports and smuggling of prohibited native foods into the United States.
- **Growing restrictions on the use of methyl bromide treatments** by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may mean that PPQ will lose this tool sooner rather than later. Currently, PPQ conducts methyl bromide treatments required by trade agreements when the foreign trading partner cannot conduct the treatments due to restricted use of these substances in their countries. Future restrictions may lead to the increased use of irradiation whenever possible. In responding to this situation, PPQ remains strongly committed to ensuring fair, safe, pest-free, and green trade practices and trade compliance.
- The possible **intentional introduction of a pest** is another significant risk. To help counter the threat of agro-terrorism, PPQ will continue its active involvement in the Select Agent Program.
- **Increasing incursions of exotic pests** into agriculturally significant regions of the United States have resulted in implementation of increased phytosanitary restrictions on U.S. exports by foreign trading partners. Effective communication with our trading partners regarding the Agency's exotic pest eradication, control, and exclusion and prevention activities is essential to reduce potential adverse impact on trade.
- It is becoming more and more apparent that the pool of people to recruit from, within PPQ, that knows anything of port operations or inspection

rates or target pests, etc. is dwindling to almost non-existent levels. This trend could seriously impact PPQ's ability at a senior management level down to regional levels to relate to CBP-AG in everything from CBP-AG workload, CBP-AG focus.

- President Obama announced during his 2010 State of the Union address, the **establishment of the National Export Initiative (NEI)**, with the goal of doubling U.S. exports over the next five years. The Secretary of Agriculture is a member of the newly established Export Promotion Cabinet. USDA is expected to contribute significantly to this effort. PPQ has a unique role to contribute to NEI's success. U.S. agriculture is typically a strong export sector, often showing a trade surplus even when other sectors are in deficit.

Reducing plant pest risks before they reach the border is a key element of protecting American agriculture and natural resources. To this end, PPQ has launched a number of offshore initiatives, such as the Offshore Pest Information Program and Exotic Pest Information Collection and Analysis project. PPQ is also actively working to learn more about pests that have entered the United States, such as the Asian longhorned beetle and emerald ash borer, to develop more effective control strategies. In addition, PPQ has developed collaborative offshore programs such as Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative with neighboring countries to mitigate pest risks in those countries. PPQ has also established cooperative programs with Japan, Russia and Korea to detect and mitigate the risk of Asian Gypsy Moth introduction into the U.S. on ships coming to the U.S. PPQ needs to better coordinate, strengthen, and expand these programs.

Another overseas trend is the growing need for developing countries to create and maintain the regulatory capacity required to support increased agricultural trade. The current Administration is paying more attention to developing and post-war countries, which could lead to greater emphasis on production capacity building in these nations. In addition, PPQ has been receiving more requests from foreign departments of agriculture to participate in its training programs. In response, Plant Health Programs established a position to support international capacity building and intergovernmental training. However, PPQ must carefully evaluate the value of these regulatory capacity building efforts, given the amount of resources required to deliver the training and the extent to which it falls within PPQ'S mission.

Safeguarding nursery production is another important aspect of PPQ's pest exclusion and prevention activities. These efforts include developing science-based, best management and risk mitigation practices to exclude, contain, and control regulated pests from the nursery production chain. They also include the development and harmonization of audit-based nursery certification programs. These activities will help small producers and distributors to mitigate pest risks, reduce operational costs, and enhance the value of the nursery stock they produce.

## *Objectives & Actionable Strategies*

**Program Objective 1.1:** Address the pest risks associated with the importation of agriculture commodities, plants for planting and research materials.

### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Revise and publish additional regulations to manage the risk of plants for planting more effectively; *(PHSTF Recommendation Priority)*
  - *Identify and restrict plant taxa to be excluded pending risk analyses*
  - *Rule on Control Import Permits*
  - *Rule on certification and accreditation*
  - *Rule to restructure the rule for plants for planting (Q-37)*
2. Establish the organizational infrastructure, at headquarters and as needed in the Regions to support implementation of the Not Approved Pending Pest Risk Analysis (NAPPRA) rule for importation of Plants for Planting.
3. Establish, maintain and update a list of plants determined to be NAPPRA on the PPQ Website to keep the public informed of the species that have been added to the NAPPRA list.
4. Finalize and publish revisions to fruits and vegetables regulations to expand use of regulatory streamlining. *(PHSTF Recommendation Priority)*
5. Revise and update organism and soil permitting regulations.
6. Enhance PPQ's partnership with DHS CBP to focus on the successful achievement of the agriculture mission at the ports-of-entry. *(PHSTF Recommendation Priority and also supports achievement of Overarching Goal 2)*
7. Ensure effective and efficient operations of the Plant Inspection Stations including strengthening the effectiveness of visual inspection at PIS and diagnostics to optimize the chance of detecting exotic pests through the sampling and inspection procedures to make them more risk-based and uniform;
8. Continue to identify and develop technology to augment visual inspection to increase the likelihood of detecting exotic pests at ports of entry.
9. Initiate domestic irradiation of commodities upon arrival in the U.S.
10. Wherever possible encourage/incentivize the use of more environmentally friendly methodologies to mitigate pest risks on commodity imports, including strategies to reduce methyl bromide use.

**Program Objective 1.2:** Ensure all pest exclusion/prevention activities address the highest risk pathways

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Develop strategies to address the pest risks associated with high risk pathways, such as, internet commerce, international mail, expedited couriers, international passenger baggage; the newly established or expanded transit routes for trade, such as, the re-opening of the Panama Canal, the new deep water ports in Mexico associated transit route through interior U.S. and the indirect importation of commodities into the U.S. via our traditional trading partners, such as, Canada.
  - *Build on current success and expand the use of canine teams in international mail facilities coupled with a robust risk analysis after 2-3 years of data collection in the mail interception database to better target incoming shipments;*
  - *Work with CBP to develop a fresh approach to target high risk mail shipments from overseas including coming in from Puerto Rico for inspection;*
  - *Develop a mechanism to enhance PPQ's ability to track, identify, and analyze non-compliant activity that occurs in internet commerce pathway and develop an action plan to address the issue collectively with international partners;*
2. Enhance PPQ's analytical capacity, including working with other federal agencies (e.g., CBP, FDA, US Fish and Wildlife, FSIS, IES) to identify and target the highest risk pathways for new exotic pest introductions.
3. Ensure regulatory actions that most reduce risks are given appropriate priority.
4. Work with industry (exporting into the U.S.) to encourage and reward them with fewer inspections for efforts to clean up low risk commodities, e.g., the National Agriculture Release Program (NARP), prior to entering the U.S. to reduce pest load so PPQ can focus more time on high risk commodities. Expand the use of canine teams at ports of entry, particularly at high risk pathways.
5. Ensure the Select Agent Program continues to meet the bio-security requirements of U.S. agriculture.
6. Continue to ensure that pathways for smuggled agricultural products are closed as the result of trade compliance and interdiction activities.
7. Build Veterinary Regulatory Support's capacity to better anticipate and proactively address emerging animal disease threats to the US and constantly changing animal health priorities.

8. Integrate Veterinary Regulatory Support's role within the "One World, One Health, One Medicine" concept to protect the nation's animal and public health.
9. Work with CBP and IES to identify ways to streamline the violations process to ensure IES is focused on violations associated with high risk material.
10. Engage the full range of stakeholders in contributing to, suggesting improvements in and participating in programs aimed at preventing the introduction and spread of animal and plant pests and invasive plants.

**Program Objective 1.3:** Ensure all pest exclusion/prevention activities address the highest risk at Ports of Entry and Plant Inspection Stations

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Enhance/strengthen PPO's and CBP's electronic data collection efforts and systems, such as the Agricultural Risk Management System (ARM) and analysis of that data, including national and regional trend analysis to ensure all pest exclusion activities are aimed at the highest pest risks.
2. Support the Pest Risk Committees by providing them with sound risk analyses that identifies high risk commodities and pathways.
3. Work with CBP to develop and use technologies, such as, bar coding scanning or RFID technology to track the *country of origin* of shipments, commodities and destinations of cargo.
4. Work with interested industry to engage national labs in the U.S. (e.g., working with DOD and DHS) on cargo inspections, trace elements, treatment verification, sniffing technology to detect plant volatiles to aid inspections at ports of entry.
5. Implement the Federally Recognized State Managed Phyto-sanitary Program (FRSMP: pronounced "free stamp") at the ports-of-entry ensuring all manuals and actionable listings are developed and POE Officers are trained.
6. Enhance the consistent application of APHIS regulations and policy, including guidelines regarding the appropriate violations to report to IES, at the Ports of Entry to strengthen the exclusion of animal diseases and pests.
7. Work with CBP to create opportunities for APHIS personnel to gain experience in the current Port of Entry environment and for CBP personnel to gain exposure to PPO policy development in APHIS.
8. Provide the Plant Inspection Stations with the resources and best tools available to support their work, such as, the addition of barcode technology for streamlining the processing of submitted samples, biological technicians to do specimen preparation,

imaging and assembling reports, and a digital asset management system so that identifications can be done more quickly.

9. Explore feasibility of providing access to information to exporters-importers, e.g., pest interception data, to smooth out the export-import process.

**Program Objective 1.4** Expand and enhance offshore pest exclusion activities including Preclearance, North American Perimeter Approach, the Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative and the Pacific Safeguarding Initiative.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Strengthen, expand and improve coordination of the agency's offshore pest surveillance activities and programs and ensure they are linked to ongoing PPQ programs. (PHSTF Priority recommendation)
2. Identify and pursue multiple ways to build international cooperation to deal with pest threats, e.g., identifying and sharing information on key pathways for introduction of new threats, international warning networks, international eradication programs.<sup>2</sup>
3. Explore the inclusion in PPQ's offshore programs of sentinel plant networks in which North American plants are grown in other biogeographic realms to be monitored to detect which insects and pathogens native to the region attack them.
4. Fully support and possibly expand initiatives, such as the Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative, the Asian Gypsy Moth Program, and the North American Perimeter Approach with Canada to evaluate, determine and develop strategies to address the biggest plant pest threats shared in common in the North American region.
5. Enhance efficiency and effectiveness of preclearance program by consolidating under unified management in PPQ.
6. Identify and launch strategic capacity building projects aligned with PPQ's mission and scope of activity and *with the President's priorities for international advancement of food security*, when appropriate.

**Program Objective 1.5:** Ensure competitiveness of specialty crop and small producers in the global marketplace

*Actionable Strategies:*

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<sup>2</sup> Waage, J.K., Mumford, J.D. 2008 *Agricultural Biosecurity*, Philosophical Transactions of The Royal Society B 363, pp.872-873.

1. Supply high quality asexually propagated plant material free of targeted plant pests through programs that include the National Clean Plant Network and secure ongoing funding mechanism beyond the Farm Bill funding.
2. Work to overcome phytosanitary barriers to increase agricultural *exports* in support of rural economies.
3. Develop and harmonize audit-based certification programs including the harmonization of different certification programs, audit and inspection training for cooperators. (Note: this strategy is supported by Section 10201 of the 2008 Farm Bill Implementation Plan)
4. Develop science-based best management practices and risk mitigation practices to exclude, contain and control regulated pests from the nursery production chain. (Note: this strategy is supported by Section 10201 of the 2008 Farm Bill Implementation Plan)

**Program Objective 1.6:** Overcome phytosanitary barriers to strengthen U.S. access to global marketplace in support of the National Export Initiative (NEI).

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Increase the efficiency and usefulness of the export certification program through technology improvements to Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance and Tracking (PCIT) system, such as, the new foreign import requirements database and the ability to send and receive phytosanitary certificates electronically.
2. Identify and solidify strategic opportunities for removing or reducing phytosanitary barriers impacting market retention, access and expansion of U.S. agriculture products through increased bi-lateral dialogue with traditional and non-traditional trading partners.
3. Enhance PPQ's engagement with U.S. stakeholders and producers to identify and communicate new market access opportunities, export trade requirements and *potential* phytosanitary barriers to trade.
4. Collaborate with research community and stakeholders to develop science-based solutions to support and resolve overly burdensome phytosanitary restrictions *to export U.S. agriculture products*.
5. Enhance coordination between PPQ's Plant Health Program Phytosanitary Issues Management unit and Emergency and Domestic Programs to develop more comprehensive strategies that allow for continued or expanded access to export markets for U.S. products.
6. Increase inter-agency and intra-agency communication with the US Trade Representative (USTR), FAS, APHIS International Services, Department of State, U.S. Agency for International

Development (USAID), and others to expand PPQ's situational awareness of broader trade issues and challenges occurring in other venues. The information exchanged can leverage all agencies' negotiating positions in trade bi-laterals and their support for the Administration's foreign policy goals.

*Program Goal 1 Performance Measures:*

- ❖ % of approaching *international air passengers* in compliance with agricultural quarantine regulations
- ❖ % of approaching *border vehicles* inspected in compliance with agricultural quarantine regulations
- ❖ % of approaching *cargo* inspected in compliance with agricultural quarantine regulations



**Program Goal 2: Enhance PPQ's capacity to detect the presence of new exotic potential plant health pest or invasive plant threats as early as possible so that an appropriate and timely response can be launched.**

*(Note: this goal encapsulates the pest detection portions of the Section 10201 2008 Farm Bill Implementation Plan.)*

### **BACKGROUND**

PPQ's pest detection program uses a multi-pronged strategy to accomplish its mission of identifying pest threats. This strategy includes developing and deploying scientifically sound survey protocols and pest diagnostics, conducting pest surveys, accurately identifying pests of regulatory significance, and reporting pest survey results in a timely manner. To facilitate exports and interstate commerce, the program also maintains nationwide survey results for pests of regulatory significance to provide direct evidence of pest-free areas in the United States.

All of these efforts involve numerous stakeholders: the scientific community, other USDA agencies and Federal entities, State departments of agriculture, universities, and industry partners. In most cases, APHIS establishes formal partnerships with these groups through cooperative agreements administered by the CAPS program. Through the CAPS network, APHIS and its State cooperators conduct surveys each year for high-risk pests of national and State interest and share survey results in the National Agricultural Pest Information System (NAPIS) database.

Although CAPS does not provide the resources to implement rapid responses to new threats, Section 10201 provides funds—and flexibility in the funding structure—over the next 5 years to support initial emergency response activities until longer term funding can be secured through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) fund. The Section 10201 funding will allow plant health officials to respond rapidly when a pest or disease is detected early and to respond to the outbreak before it becomes established or spreads. Quick success means avoiding the high costs of a long-term management program, and it helps maintain access to international markets for U.S. plants and plant products.

Having the necessary resources for a rapid response will enable PPQ to develop a more proactive approach to plant health protection, solidify its partnerships with the States and industry, and make meaningful advances in its pest detection infrastructure. Moreover, cooperators have told PPQ they would be more willing to report a new pest under this strategy because they would be

more likely to benefit from a quick, "surgical" response that is specific to a small area and has no longer-term, negative local or national impacts. Perhaps most importantly, Section 10201 of the 2008 Farm Bill will allow PPQ to bridge the gaps between a myriad of pest detection and surveillance programs and increase the diagnostic capacity for plant pests and diseases. By better integrating and coordinating Federal, State, and industry efforts on this front, PPQ can develop a more comprehensive picture of plant health in the United States based on solid, accurate data. This information will help considerably to facilitate and enhance trade opportunities for U.S. plant producers and nursery growers. For the detailed Section 10201 implementation plan see:

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant\\_health/plant\\_pest\\_info/pest\\_detection/downloads/Section10201-3-09.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/pest_detection/downloads/Section10201-3-09.pdf)

## *Objectives & Actionable Strategies*

*Program Objective 2.1:* Enhance plant pest/disease data collection and analysis to deploy resources efficiently to detect pests as early as possible.

### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Identify and target high risk pathways
2. Fund the highest priority pest-specific surveys with Section 10201 Farm Bill and Pest Detection monies;
3. Enhance high-risk surveillance programs through State survey cooperative agreements.
4. Engage the public and other governmental and NGO's to participate in pest detection activities in addition to implementing a formal volunteer program referenced in Overarching Goal 1.

*Program Objective 2.2:* Target domestic inspection activities at vulnerable points in the safeguarding continuum resulting from the movement of products potentially carrying pests of regulatory significance.

### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Work with PHP to promote and expand inland inspections of containers and mail facilities, where possible;
2. Expand the use of canine teams for domestic survey activities,
3. Increase efficiency of inspections for regulated articles for interstate movement through multiple program activities, focusing on pathways versus specific pests, State inspections for Federally Recognized State Managed Phytosanitary Program, etc
4. As a means to facilitate compliance and strengthen the enforcement of domestic quarantines, encourage State Plant

Health Directors to explore partnerships with other state entities, such as, state motor carrier enforcement divisions to help monitor and alert PPQ of the movement of regulated articles (nursery stock, timber, products, etc) thereby giving PPQ the opportunity to conduct follow up investigations to determine whether a domestic quarantine boundary has been violated or compromised.

***Program Objective 2.3:*** Strengthen survey procedures and tools to improve PPQ's capacity to rapidly detect and accurately identify pests of regulatory significance.

***Actionable Strategies:***

1. Improve all aspects of early detection resources.
2. Enhance pest screening expertise and taxonomic capacity both within and external to PPQ
3. Increase the deployment of the most sensitive, reliable and accurate diagnostic tools;
4. Develop and implement a comprehensive National traps and lures management program and
5. Pursue offshore initiatives to optimize early detection programs. (This also supports Objective 1.3 under Program Goal 1)

***Program Objective 2.4:*** Enhance the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program to better involve and serve stakeholders.

***Actionable Strategies:***

1. Expand the use of multiple pest surveys based on commonalities, such as, taxa, types of business, habitats, commodities, etc.
2. Standardize PPQ approved national survey protocols regarding traps and lures used, sampling procedures and diagnostic and identification protocols to capture valid entry of negative data.
3. Strengthen outreach program with the CAPS community and industry to ensure consistent support and alignment with the CAPS program.
4. Utilize best risk, pathway, and trend analysis information gleaned from prevention operations to develop critical CAPS target pest and survey locations.

***Program Goal 2 Performance Measure:*** Percent of significant introductions detected before they spread and value of damages prevented through early detection efforts.

## Program Goal 3: Enhance PPQ's capacity to strategically prepare for, respond to and assist in recovery from plant health emergencies.

### *BACKGROUND*

A myriad of challenges face PPQ's ability to respond to plant health emergencies:

- **The increasing number of new pest outbreaks<sup>3</sup>** is stretching PPQ resources thin. PPQ's leadership must ensure that PPQ is playing the appropriate role and focusing its limited resources on the most strategic ongoing programs.
- **Changing public attitudes in urban settings where many new pests introductions occur** along with the rapid spread of information through the internet and social media, have created new challenges to engage with the public to establish two-way communication and to gain their support for PPQ's proposed response strategies.
- **The impacts of climate change** expand the host range of pests and increase the likelihood of overwintering. This increases the stress of host plants and renders them more vulnerable to new pest introductions, compounding the challenges of an effective emergency response.
- **Environmental regulatory controls likely to increase** over the next 5 years including the possibility of more severe limitations on the use of Methyl Bromide and the organophosphates that PPQ has traditionally used in response to new pest introductions.
- **The mono-culture of today's agriculture and the narrowing of the germplasm** in the United States make our crops more susceptible to pest and diseases and increase the potential for greater crop devastation if these threats are introduced into the country.
- **Sustainable agricultural practices** are also a high priority for the new Secretary. This priority promotes the management of land for long-term use and reduced reliance on the use of fertilizers and, notably, pesticides.
- **Biotechnology** continues to generate tension among the more traditional and organic producers, especially in Europe. At the same time, there is more acceptance of using biotechnology by U.S. commercial producers, especially as a tool to develop varieties resistant to diseases. Promoting biotechnology exports is part of the new Secretary's priority list.

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<sup>3</sup> In 2009, 58 pests and pathogens were detected (either through CAPS surveys or reported to APHIS) and identified as new or re-introduced into the U.S. 32 of these were significant and listed as reportable and actionable, 21 were not categorized, and 5 were non-reportable/non-actionable.

- **Economic opportunities** are created for rural America's new, small, mid-sized and economically disadvantaged farmers by ensuring their crops are fully protected in PPQ's emergency response programs. PPQ's emergency response programs ensure phyto-sanitary status of crops for export.

### *Objectives & Actionable Strategies:*

**Program Objective 3.1:** Ensure emergency preparedness planning and activities are strategically targeted and proactively implemented.

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Continue to update the prioritized list of major exotic pest threats to be used across PPQ, organized by commodity and/or by major agriculture producing states to better utilize PPQ resources in preparing for and responding to plant health emergencies when they arise. (Plant Health Strategies recommendation)
2. Develop and publish a template for creating new pest response guidelines and tools.
3. Develop a prototype for organizing response guidelines by commodity.
4. Ensure Program Managers routinely build coalitions among relevant stakeholders in the delivery of plant health emergency and domestic programs. (e.g., when and how to engage RMA/crop insurance, box tax, industry involvement, etc.)
5. Finalize, communicate and institutionalize the Emergency Management Framework (EMF) as a way PPQ conducts business.
6. Prepare the agency and collaborative partners in the consistent use of the Incident Command System (ICS) for plant health response activities.
7. Continue to prepare, train, and exercise emergency responders and managers as well as maintain the Incident Management Teams (IMT).

**Program Objective 3.2:** Ensure effective and timely emergency response to plant health emergencies.

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Communicate the process being followed to respond to an emerging plant pest issue; including defining the point at which PPQ resources engage in a plant health program in response to an emerging pest threat, the short-term actions expected prior to standing up an official emergency response and the status of completing those actions and defining the point at which PPQ resources cease to engage in a plant health emergency response.

2. Ensure effective and early coordination among all PPQ program units, states, tribes, industry, other federal agencies and stakeholders to establish agreement or alignment in developing and implementing the optimal strategy for addressing plant health emergencies.
3. Ensure accurate and timely information is provided regarding the new pest outbreaks and to respond more effectively to the public and industry's concerns by engaging LPA and NGOs (e.g., The Nature Conservancy) earlier in the emergency response.
4. Assess, decide, communicate and coordinate an appropriate short term course of action to respond quickly to the detection of a pest of potential regulatory significance.
5. Ensure PPQ's emergency response strategies are designed to protect rural America's new, small, mid-sized and economically disadvantaged farmers.

*Program Objective 3.3:* Ensure sound long term sustainable strategies are incorporated into crop production practices in the recovery phase of a plant health emergency.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Work with industry to develop and implement models, where applicable, for managing and integrating systems approaches to ensure long term sustainability for crops which may include the following elements:
  - Identification of critical control points for maximizing plant health in production systems;
  - Identification of the means to produce commodities that meet phytosanitary requirements;
  - Identification of longer-term sustainable strategies to achieve pest free status.
2. Work with industry, states and tribes to identify sustainable production practices, such as, innovative integrated pest management (IPM) approaches and greater biodiversity, incorporating genetically modified organisms (GMO) to minimize the impacts of invasive species.
3. Strengthen PPQ's biological control program to meet the plant health emergency challenges and long term pest management strategies.

*Program Goal 3 Performance Measure: # of Emerging Plant Pest Programs that have prevented significant economic and environmental damage caused by the artificial spread and/or establishment of targeted pests beyond the established quarantine area.*

**Program Goal 4:** Ensure PPQ's portfolio of programs is the most effective, efficient, strategic and relevant in the face of emerging and ongoing exotic pest and invasive plant threats and the impacts from the changing climate.

### *BACKGROUND*

PPQ's basic assumption is that existing individual pest-specific programs are necessary to contain or slow the spread of the pest and should be continued as long as sufficient funding for effective implementation is made available unless some scientifically defensible evidence determines the pest no longer poses a threat. Through PPQ's Quality Assurance Program, PPQ's program management continually seeks new approaches and technologies aimed at increasing program efficacy and efficiency. At the same time, PPQ's resources are continually challenged by the increased number of new pest outbreaks. Once the initial emergency response is launched, the new pest program is added to the growing list of ongoing pest programs. PPQ recognizes the need to address this resource issue and to ensure PPQ's role is the most appropriate as the pest program matures and has made progress toward achieving the program goal. To this end, PPQ plans to establish a formal evaluation process to examine some of the longer standing programs to ensure PPQ's role is the most effective and appropriate under the current set of circumstances, including an assessment of the actual threat the pest poses.

### *Objectives & Actionable Strategies:*

**Program Objective 4.1:** Ensure PPQ programs are routinely evaluated to confirm continued strategic relevance and to determine the nature of PPQ's continuing role and deployment of resources.

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Establish an Ongoing Pest Advisory Group (OPAG) to take responsibility for coordinating routine reviews of PPQ Programs to make a determination if the pest should continue to be regulated, its continued relevance to PPQ's mission and/or the best use of PPQ's limited resources by the program.
2. Develop a review process on how programs will be evaluated for making recommendations to the PPQ Leadership Team.
3. Actively engage a broad range of stakeholders early on in the process of evaluating the programs to get their input regarding the future of a domestic program.

4. When new pest specific programs are established, identify a trigger mechanism for future review of the program for relevance and continuation.
5. Implement and encourage the use of Federally Recognized State Managed Phytosanitary Program (FRSMP/pronounced “Free Stamp”) as an alternative to continued Federal Managed Official Control, when appropriate, while ensuring individual state’s needs are adequately met through this approach.
6. Factor in changing climate conditions on current pest programs using predictive modeling initiatives to help determine future course of action.

**Program Objective 4.2:** Ensure the effective and efficient operation of Domestic Programs

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Establish a schedule to conduct a Quality Assurance (QA) review of PPQ’s pest specific programs based on the biology of the pest and scope of the program.
2. Communicate clearly the Quality Assurance protocols with PPQ, stakeholders and states.
3. Ensure accountability for implementing the QA recommendations following a QA review.
4. Continue to conduct reviews of pest specific programs by state to improve the effectiveness and efficiency and identify best practices.
5. Identify, document, reward and communicate innovative approaches and best practices that improve program effectiveness and efficiency of plant pest programs, including long-term sustainable production practices into all appropriate ongoing programs.
6. Evaluate and determine how to better utilize manuals and guidelines for operational programs

**Program Objective 4.3:** Ensure realistic final outcomes and/or end-points are clearly defined when establishing new pest-specific programs along with plans for transitioning the program activities to other entities once those outcomes are achieved or the pre-defined end-point has been reached.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Establish a periodic review process including criteria to be used throughout the life of a program to either validate the continued appropriateness of the initial stated outcome; to determine if the outcome needs to be revised in light of changed circumstances or as new information becomes available and to determine future role of PPQ.
2. Consider including triggers to review and possibly initiate sunset clauses in programs when the original goals have proven to be



unobtainable, available funding or methods are insufficient, or new methods allow for transitioning to a non-federal management in situations where federal quarantines are not needed to manage interstate commerce.

3. Ensure the science based strategies used to pursue desired outcomes are balanced with what is socially and politically acceptable.
4. Collaborate with stakeholders in gathering input to establish realistic outcomes for new programs and future direction once these outcomes are achieved.
5. Develop a mechanism to address increased risk posed by delay in recognizing infested counties as quarantine areas within states.

*Program Goal 4 Performance Measure: % of ongoing Pest Programs that have prevented significant economic and environmental damage caused by the artificial spread of targeted pests beyond the established quarantine area.*



## Management Initiatives

### *BACKGROUND*

PPQ's major strength continues to reside in its dedicated and technically competent work-force. This workforce continually goes the extra mile to do whatever it takes to accomplish PPQ's mission. This dedication and scientific expertise is demonstrated on a daily basis by employees who are empowered to independently carry out their basic responsibilities from the inspecting enormous volumes of shipments of plant material to diagnosing complex plant diseases to working long hours away from home when responding to a plant health emergency. The complexity and intellectual challenges of our work keep people motivated to ensure PPQ's programs effectively achieve the stated goals that ultimately benefit the agricultural industry and general public's interests. PPQ's reputation for innovation continues which allows the organization to achieve new levels of excellence. Many PPQ employees enjoy tremendous support for continual learning through the use of learning contracts, supported by their supervisors and the training opportunities made available through PPQ's Professional Development Center.

With the advent of web 2.0 and social media, PPQ program staffs have been confronted with the challenge of engaging with the public in that venue in meaningful and timely manner. We are realizing that we do not always have the situational awareness, knowledge of the social sciences, skills and mechanisms in place to solicit input from the public that their feedback can be factored into the response strategies we pursue. In 2009, PPQ recognized in its Strategic Plan for Information Systems Management, the need to ensure the development of new IT systems occur in a timely manner and that these new systems fully support its key business processes more efficiently and effectively. In light of the pressures placed on PPQ's operations by the increasing numbers of new pest introductions, PPQ has realized it needs a more efficient and effective decision making process to keep up with these challenges. Many strategic goals in the 2006 Strategic Plan for Civil Rights in PPQ have yet to be implemented to achieve its vision for PPQ to be "a recognized leader dedicated to creating and sustaining a diverse workforce and a positive work environment, valuing all employees and instilling in them a sense of true belonging as they provide fair and impartial program delivery." This vision certainly aligns with the Secretary's vision to transform the culture in USDA. Recently, PPQ's recruitment function has been revamped to tackle the challenges of recruiting and retaining a highly qualified workforce at locations where the cost of living is high, to increase diversity in the organization and to ensure highly qualified recruits will replace retiring PPQ employees. These recruitment efforts need to be supported by the

development of Workforce and Succession Plans. The recent economic downturn has affected the agency's revenue collected through user fees. This has forced the agency to make a number of cost cutting measures. PPQ has secured the services of a third party to analyze our current situation and make recommendations on ways to increase the user fee in more equitable manner among all transport companies to help cover the budget shortfalls.

In addition to PPQ's internal challenges, there are a number of initiatives and new laws that will affect PPQ's internal operations:

- **American Disabilities Act** has expanded to include more disabilities which are broadly defined so more accommodations may be required.
- **Tele-work improvement Act** is currently moving through Congress which could put pressure on PPQ managers to allow more employees to work at home.

**Management Initiative 1: Improve the quality, metrics, communication and implementation of the decisions made in PPQ**

### *Specific Initiatives & Actionable Strategies:*

**Initiative 1.1:** Ensure the best, most educated and scientifically sound decisions are made consistently by instituting the Decision Making Framework and Principles.

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Apply the PPQ Decision Making Framework when trigger events occur consistently and effectively.
2. Establish a Decision Making Coordination mechanism to track critical decisions to be made and ensure the decision making framework is applied appropriately, all supporting documentations and decisions are recorded and archived.
3. Test the Decision Making Framework and evaluate results and make any needed revisions to the process.
4. Establish a central repository for all program and regulatory decisions and make these available to all PPQ employees and stakeholders.

**Initiative 1.2:** Finalize and communicate the roles and responsibilities for all PPQ program and work units.

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Finalize and communicate roles and responsibilities in the context of Shared Leadership, at all levels of the organization for the Emergency and Domestic Programs.
2. Identify any other key roles that need to be clarified, documented and communicated
3. Establish a central repository for all documents describing roles and responsibilities.
4. Ensure all responsible parties responsible for implementing key program decisions and national policies are clearly identified and mechanisms put in place to ensure follow-through and implementation occurs as expected.

**Initiative 1.3:** Encourage, support and acknowledge effective cross-unit communication, coordination and collaboration.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Ensure PPQ program staffs are fully aware of the tools and technology currently available through CPHST. *(Note: this supports Overarching Goal 3.)*
2. Build on and expand on current efforts of key PPQ program units providing an orientation to other work units regarding their organizational function
3. Encourage and build on current program unit’s explorations to find ways to increase coordination and collaboration across units.
4. Continue and expand temporary duty (TDY) developmental assignments to increase PPQ employees’ exposure to different parts of the organization.

**Management Initiative 2:** Achieve the vision for PPQ to become the employer of choice as *“ a recognized leader dedicated to creating and sustaining a diverse workforce and positive work environment, valuing all employees and instilling in them a sense of true belonging as they provide fair and impartial program delivery.”*

*Specific Initiatives & Actionable Strategies:*

**Initiative 2.1:** Make a shift in the PPQ work environment from one that tolerates diversity to an inclusive one that actively embraces and values the diversity present in its workforce and stakeholder community in alignment with the USDA Cultural Transformation initiative.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Engage the PPQ Leadership Team to gain their full and active support for USDA and PPQ's diversity strategy, recognizing people in the organization take their cues from the top of the organization.
2. Evaluate the feasibility to establish an infrastructure to support the organization's (PPQ) and individual employee's ability to establish an inclusive work environment that fully embraces and leverages diversity as a strategic advantage.
3. Conduct an organizational assessment to carefully study the organization-its culture, opportunities, challenges, long-term potential and possibilities for maximizing performance; to identify what people need from the organization to contribute more effectively to its current and future success, what people need to do their best work and what the organization needs from them.
4. Develop an effective "roll-out", communication or "marketing campaign" to communicate "Diversity Initiative" to shift from tolerance to acceptance of diversity in the work environment.
5. Ensure the appropriate training and development opportunities are made available to PPQ employees at all levels to learn and effectively demonstrate the Civil Rights Guiding Principles to support the new PPQ culture of inclusiveness.

**Initiative 2.2:** Construct a PPQ workforce at all levels of the organization that utilizes and reflects the diverse demographics found in the American general population.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Expand and operationalize the concept of diversity to extend beyond the typical demographics (race, gender, age, etc) to include different work and communication styles and other differences for which individuals can be appreciated and valued.
2. Develop and implement strategies to increase diversity in the organization to reflect the diverse populations in PPQ work unit's surrounding geographic area
3. Ensure PPQ's recruitment program that is responsive to and representative of managements needs, meets annual diversity goals and draws upon the talents and participation of current PPQ employees.
4. Utilize a variety of learning opportunities (shadowing, action learning, etc) to increase skills within PPQ to ensure a well-trained and well-rounded workforce from which to fill future vacancies in accordance with principles for employing underrepresented groups.
5. Ensure PPQ Supervisors are working with employees to identify career goals and helping them identify and document in their learning contracts any training and developmental activities to help them reach their career goals.

6. Ensure succession planning remains a PPQ priority and provides equal opportunities for the broad cross section of diversity represented in the organization's workforce.
7. Exercise the option to participate in the pilot program (CY 2011) of EPA's relocation services to support employees who wish to relocate to accept positions at the regions, headquarters (HQ) or other career enhancing positions in alternative duty stations.

**Initiative 2.3:** Enhance PPQ's training and development programs and Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR) training initiatives and to support the creation of an inclusive work environment where each and every employee has a true sense of belonging.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Develop dual interactive, supporting and mission related training plan for supervisors and employees
2. Develop tracking system to assess the progress of the training plan/training
3. Assess the impact of the training and address areas requiring improvements
4. Integrate all needed competencies to support the Civil Rights Guiding Principles into current and newly developed training to complement the mandated EEO/CR training

**Initiative 2.4:** Identify and address the underlying root causes of PPQ employee grievances and improve or develop strategies that results in a 20% reduction of the total number of EEO complaints related to non-selection, reasonable accommodation and retaliation.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Obtain feedback from PPQ employees at all levels and parts of the organization to determine the current levels of their feelings of value and fair treatment and their general knowledge and use of available tools and processes for Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity (CR/EEO) related issues.
2. Ensure that all PPQ employees are knowledgeable of the existence and use of the Conflict Prevention and Resolution (CPR) program and the Administrative Grievance (AG) process for resolving employee complaints as an alternative to direct filing through the APHIS CREC EEO process.
3. Develop strategies to reduce the number of EEO complaints filed for applicant non-selection.
4. Develop strategies to reduce the number of EEO complaints filed for issues related to retaliation.

5. Improve the knowledge base and reporting mechanism for PPQ managers and employees regarding issues related to requests for reasonable accommodation.
6. Include modules in new and experienced supervisory training programs on the contributing factors to employee grievances and complaints and the skills supervisors need to develop to avoid the contributing factors.
7. Explore the feasibility for the creation of a Career Coaching Unit to support employees' personal growth and career development by assisting them in finding productive ways to improve their skills and promotion potential through feedback, learning, and positive experiences.

**Initiative 2.5:** Strengthen the Special Emphasis Program Manager's (SEPM) role in promoting PPQ's Civil Rights Vision of creating a diverse workforce, to ensure a positive inclusive work environment is developed and supported, and to ensure impartial program delivery.

***Actionable Strategies:***

1. Increase PPQ management's awareness of the SEPM 's roles and responsibilities
2. Develop strategies to enhance PPQ SEPM's ability to delivery Special Emphasis Program (SEP) within PPQ
3. Actively promote and assist management with achieving a diverse workforce
4. Develop strategies to achieve impartial program delivery
5. Actively promote and assist management with creating or enhancing an environment that embraces diversity and a positive work environment

*Note: While this initiative began a number of years ago in PPQ, it is in direct alignment with the USDA Cultural Transformation Initiative. See Appendix B for the table that presents the USDA Goals, Performance Objectives and Goal Indicators as they pertain to Agency Leadership commitment to improving civil rights in APHIS and PPQ.*

**Management Initiative 3: Build the capacity of PPQ's workforce to successfully meet current and future program challenges**

***Specific Initiatives & Actionable Strategies:***



**Initiative 3.1:** Recruit and hire highly qualified and diverse workforce to ensure maximum retention and minimal attrition of the high performing PPQ employees.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive Workforce Plan and set up a mechanism to monitor implementation and make mid-course correction to address emerging gaps in the Workforce Plan.
2. Customize the APHIS Succession Plan to include journeyman officers and to accommodate PPQ's needs at the local level.
3. Study retention trends and issues via workforce and succession planning efforts.
4. Develop an overall recruitment strategic plan based on PPQ's workforce and succession plans and gain PPQ Leadership's support for implementation. When funding and positions become available:
  - a. Increase recruitment activities targeted toward unrepresented groups and veterans.
  - b. The PPQ National Recruitment and Outreach (NRO) staff will train a cadre of recruiters so we can do a much better job in reaching students and graduates.
  - c. Expand recruitment efforts beyond colleges to include 4H clubs, Junior Colleges, foreign Colleges (i.e. Canada-Mexico etc.), and the Military.
  - d. Develop and provide hiring and retention tools including funds to managers to hire and retain high performing employees
  - e. Update and provide an electronic version of the PPQ Supervisor's Recruitment Guide.
5. Educate managers so they fully understand noncompetitive hiring authorities and encourage Resource Management Specialists and other admin staff who transmit recruit SF-52s (Standard Form) to regularly counsel selecting officials on recruitment and hiring options other than case exam and merit promotion.
6. Explore options of international exchange program.
7. Develop or expand strategies, including workplace flexibilities, such as flexi-place, alternate work schedules, etc., to recruit, hire and retain the best scientific human resources available to staff core operations.
8. Provide support for Post-doc, international exchange, career internship, and graduate student programs to foster the exchange of information, new ideas, and the expansion of intellectual richness, innovative thinking and progressive scientific ideas. *(Note: this supports Overarching Goal 3.)*
9. Ensure PPQ has the expertise and resources needed to support research and development activities on forest pests and the ever-increasing challenges of agricultural invasive pests.

**Initiative 3.2:** Ensure PPQ's Training and Development Plan is aligned with the Agency's Talent Management Initiatives, PPQ's Strategic Plan, and based on projected economic realities.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Explore more cost-effective/economy of scale approaches for delivering training including, AgLearn, current employees with expertise who can deliver specific training programs, and other distant learning tools.
2. Provide training to PPQ's cooperators as needed and when feasible.
3. Work with LPA to expand PPQ's knowledge and understanding/ situational awareness of the social sciences and interpersonal communication skills to engage traditional and non-traditional stakeholders and the public more effectively.
4. Identify and develop training to support capacity building initiatives as needed (Supports Program Goal 1)
5. Design and deliver Advance Leadership Development program for APHIS employees and collaborates with other APHIS training staffs in development and delivery of other leadership curricula.
6. Develop and deliver technical training to support implementation of new technical tools or changes in regulations, etc as needed.

**Initiative 3.6:** Expand PPQ's involvement with minority serving institutions to ensure agricultural regulatory science remains a strong component of PDC's curriculum.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Develop a proposal for ways to expand PPQ's current programmatic involvement with minority serving institutions for PPQ Leadership Team's consideration, pending approval to proceed.
2. Implement targeted outreach effort to build collaborative relationships with minority serving institutions.
3. Collaborate with appropriate PPQ staffs and the institutions to standardize current biosecurity curriculum to meet mutual needs.
4. Identify and gain PPQ's support to provide the resources required to successfully implement the program.

**Management Initiative 4:** Streamline PPQ's Administrative and Program work processes to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of PPQ's program functions and operations.

### *Specific Initiatives & Actionable Strategies:*

**Initiative 4.1:** Ensure PPQ's workplace practices fully support the President's, congressional, legal and Departmental requirements. (e.g., Tele-work Improvement Act, American Disabilities Act, Office of Personnel Management's [OPM] new federal hiring practices, and workplace safety, etc)

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Establish a PPQ policy on Tele-work.
2. Educate managers and entire PPQ workforce on ADA to better promote sensitivity and inclusiveness.
3. Educate managers so they fully understand veteran and handicap hiring authorities and encourage Resource Management Specialists and other admin staff who transmit recruit SF-52s to regularly counsel selecting officials on veteran and handicap authorities so hiring options other than case exam and merit promotion are considered.
4. Provide funds needed for adaptive equipment.
5. Go to one password for everything.

**Initiative 4.2:** Work to streamline and reduce any undue burdens placed on employees by administrative systems.

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Conduct reviews of PPQ's internal administrative processes to assure our efforts are seamless throughout the organization and amend or eliminate steps/processes that are not efficient.
2. Regularly educate administrative staff on processes to assure consistency throughout PPQ.
3. Provide written guidance on the steps required for key administrative functions.
4. Encourage all newly hired administrative support staff to attend MRP-BS' annual administrative processes training, funds permitting.
5. Better publicize the assistance the PPQ HQ Resource Management role and services to the rest of the organization.
6. Represent PPQ's needs on the APHIS-wide task force to streamline APHIS administrative procedures, e.g., MRP-13, etc.

**Initiative 4.3:** Explore alternative ways or mechanisms to financially support PPQ's program activities while at the same time continuing to implement cost-cutting measures.

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Ensure the user-fee structure supports the long term goal of pest exclusion/prevention

2. Ensure PPQ maintains and/or expands its scientific resources with state-of-the art laboratories, facilities and equipment. *(Note: this supports Overarching Goal 3.)*
3. Work with other APHIS programs to ensure the APHIS Library's funding stream is adequate to support the ever increasing costs.
4. Ensure accuracy of reporting via the execution processes as well as monitoring of PPQ use of funds.
5. Ensure priorities are included via the budget development including formulation, justification, and presentation of the PPQ budget needs.
6. Evaluate processes and establish systems to monitor program spending trends.
7. Educate program managers regarding efficiencies, evaluating priorities developing, revising operational plans and evaluating program results.
8. Ensure role of the Authorized Departmental Officer's Designated Representative (ADODR) understood to do more efficient job of negotiating agreements, address any deficiencies and hold accountable.
9. Educates existing and new program managers throughout the organizations on the financial responsibilities and hold accountable.
10. Implement a mechanism to gather employee cost saving ideas and identify those that can be implemented producing true saving.

**Initiative 4.5:** Establish a clear and transparent process for transitioning a plant health emergency response program to an ongoing pest-specific program.

***Actionable Strategies:***

1. Apply criteria and communicate internally when transitioning emergency programs to domestic programs
2. Involve Domestic Program staff early in the transition process as part of the EDP team concept.
3. Clarify and communicate to stakeholders the ongoing federal role.

**Initiative 4.6:** Develop and implement program work processes that enhance the efficiency, coordination and effectiveness of program activities.

**Management Initiative 5:** Ensure PPQ's IT data systems are fully integrated with its business processes and optimize the accessibility and accuracy of information that PPQ employees need to perform their jobs.

## *Specific Initiatives & Actionable Strategies:*

### **Initiative 5.1:** Strategically position IT in PPQ

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Assign the IT unit to the Deputy Administrator's office
2. Manage PPQ's Information Management systems and new systems development from the DA's office
3. Ensure information management is integrated as a critical component of program delivery
4. Ensure effective exchange of information with the PPQ Leadership Team and workforce
5. Strengthen and continue the use of the PPQ IT Governance structure for current and any new IT systems in PPQ.

### **Initiative 5.2:** Increase PPQ's business systems management's capacity

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Work with SPHDs and SPROs to ensure their business needs and requirements are met by PPQ's information management systems
2. Use business process re-engineering to ensure PPQ's business processes are streamlined before automation solutions are designed and built.

### **Initiative 5.3:** Achieve full integration of relevant PPQ's IT systems

#### *Actionable Strategies:*

1. Finalize and apply PPQ's Enterprise Architecture
2. Begin implementation of PPQ's data architecture to maintain consistency with International Trade Data System (ITDS) data architecture at the APHIS level.
3. Establish and fill a PPQ Data Architect position to ensure a standard data set is used by all PPQ systems to support complete integrated functionality of PPQ systems
4. Complete the development and integration of the Integrated Plant Health Information System (IPHIS) and Agriculture Risk Management (ARM) systems
5. Continue participating in the development and implementation of International Trade Data System (ITDS) with the Department of Homeland Security
6. Develop and implement a strategy to engage and ensure commitment from PPQ management to fully support the deployment of new data systems

**Initiative 5.4:** Streamline the PPQ IT Investment Portfolio to reduce cost of PPQ's IT systems

*Actionable Strategies:* Maintain the reduced level of operating systems recently achieved to realize the targeted cost savings goals.

1. Complete the review of current number of software and hardware currently being used by PPQ's systems.
2. Identify and migrate current systems into a simplified and unified hardware and software platform

**Initiative 5.5:** Leverage new technologies

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Develop policies and decision making protocols needed to support wide use of SharePoint.
2. Develop policies and decision making protocols needed to support wide use of geospatial technologies.
3. Develop policies and decision making protocols needed to support wide use of Web 2.0 and social media technologies.

## Management Initiative 6: Reduce PPQ's carbon footprint

*Specific Initiatives & Actionable Strategies:*

**Initiative 6.1:** Take advantage of opportunities to create additional energy-efficient facilities, like the Canine Center in Newnan, GA.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Incorporate Sustainable Building design and High-Performance building principles in all new proposed PPQ construction/alteration projects.
2. Encourage all PPQ sites to purchase electricity and/or thermal energy from renewable energy sources.
3. Encourage self-generated electricity from renewable sources and renewable energy thermal projects (photovoltaic and solar hot water applications).
4. Provide reduction goals and award incentives for success

**Initiative 6.2:** Establish a PPQ task force to work with APHIS and PPQ leased facilities to identify and implement ways to reduce energy use in existing PPQ facilities.

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Ensure that all appropriate buildings have advanced electrical metering devices installed in order to track current and future energy consumption accurately.
2. Ensure the use of Energy Star and other Energy-efficient products at all PPQ locations
3. Conduct Existing Sustainable Building Surveys on all PPQ locations to benchmark existing sustainable practices.
4. Ensure that energy efficiency/sustainable design is included in Lease Provisions.

**Initiative 6.3:** Reduce PPQ's carbon footprint

*Actionable Strategies:*

1. Purchase energy saving equipment and technologies, e.g. motion detection driven lighting systems, and hybrid and fuel saving GOVs
2. Promote recycling programs for paper, cans, batteries, etc at all PPQ locations
3. Consolidate personnel in single locations versus multiple smaller locations, where feasible.
4. Promote the use of public transportation, car pooling, etc through incentive programs or cost reimbursements.
5. Identify ways PPQ management and employees can reduce PPQ's environmental waste
6. See Overarching Goal 3 to explore ways PPQ can reduce its carbon footprint in pest fumigations, such as, methyl bromide.





## SECTION III

### Linkages & Alignment

This section shows how PPQ's strategic goals align with the USDA and APHIS strategic goals and management initiatives in the USDA and APHIS Strategic Plans 2010-2015.

**PPQ Overarching Goal 1: Conduct outreach and education to increase the exchange with the public and stakeholders to enhance their understanding, acceptance, and support of PPQ's mission while taking into account their input and feedback into the plans and actions that the agency pursues.**

Links to:

#### USDA

**Overarching Principle: *Everyday in Every way***

*USDA's constituents understand and appreciate what the agency can do for them every day in every way because USDA employees are engaged, valued and productively serving the people of America and the world.*

**Strategic Goal 1:** Assist Rural Communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Ensure our National Forests and Private Working Lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

**Management Initiative III:** Coordinate outreach and improve consultation and collaboration efforts to increase access to USDA programs and services

#### APHIS

**Strategic Goal 1:** Support rural communities.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Protect forests, range and private lands.

**Management Initiative 5:** Engage and collaborate with a broad spectrum of stakeholders and other citizens.

PPQ Overarching Goal 2: Expand and build partnerships and coalitions with PPQ's traditional and non-traditional Local, State, Tribal Federal and International partners in carrying out the PPQ mission.

Links to:

### USDA

Overarching Principle: *Everyday in Every way*

*USDA's constituents understand and appreciate what the agency can do for them every day in every way because USDA employees are engaged, valued and productively serving the people of America and the world.*

**Strategic Goal 1:** Assist Rural Communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Ensure our National Forests and Private Working Lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

**Management Initiative III:** Coordinate outreach and improve consultation and collaboration efforts to increase access to USDA programs and services

### APHIS

**Strategic Goal 1:** Support rural communities.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Protect forests, range and private lands.

**Strategic Goal 3:** Expand opportunities to develop and trade safe agricultural products, including biotechnology-derived agricultural products.

**Strategic Goal 4:** Minimize and prevent damage to the U.S. food supply caused by plant and animal pests and diseases.

**Management Initiative 5:** Engage and collaborate with a broad spectrum of stakeholders and other citizens.

Overarching Goal 3: Enhance PPQ's Science and Technology foundation, including social science, to fully support PPQ's policy and regulatory decision-making and operations and to maintain PPQ's international leadership in plant health issues.

Links to:

### USDA

**Strategic Goal 3:** Help America promote agriculture production and biotechnology exports as America works to increase food safety.

**Strategic Goal 4:** Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious and balanced meals.

## APHIS

Strategic Goal 2: Protect forests, range and private lands.

Strategic Goal 3: Expand opportunities to develop and trade safe agricultural products, including biotechnology-derived agricultural products.

Strategic Goal 4: Minimize and prevent damage to the U.S. food supply caused by plant and animal pests and diseases.

**Program Goal 1: Optimize the effectiveness of PPQ's Pest Exclusion/Prevention activities.**

Links to:

## USDA

Strategic Goal 1: Assist Rural Communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving.

Strategic Goal 2: Ensure our National Forests and Private Working Lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

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Strategic Goal 3: Expand opportunities to develop and trade safe agricultural products, including biotechnology-derived agricultural products.

Strategic Goal 4: Minimize and prevent damage to the U.S. food supply caused by plant and animal pests and diseases.

**Program Goal 2: Enhance PPQ's capacity to detect the presence of new exotic plant health pest threats as early as possible so that an appropriate and timely response can be launched.**

Links to:

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**Strategic Goal 4:** Minimize and prevent damage to the U.S. food supply caused by plant and animal pests and diseases.

**Program Goal 3:** Enhance PPQ's capacity to proactively prepare for and strategically respond to plant health emergencies.

### Links to:

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**Strategic Goal 3:** Help America promote agriculture production and biotechnology exports as America works to increase food safety.

**Strategic Goal 4:** Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious and balanced meals.

**Management Initiative VII:** Enhance USDA Homeland Security and emergency preparedness to protect USDA employees and the public.

### APHIS

**Strategic Goal 1:** Support rural communities.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Protect forests, range and private lands.

**Strategic Goal 3:** Expand opportunities to develop and trade safe agricultural products, including biotechnology-derived agricultural products.

**Strategic Goal 4:** Minimize and prevent damage to the U.S. food supply caused by plant and animal pests and diseases.

**Program Goal 4:** Ensure PPO's portfolio of programs is the most strategic and relevant in the face of emerging and ongoing exotic pest threats and the impacts from the changing climate.

**Links to:**

### **USDA**

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**Strategic Goal 3:** Help America promote agriculture production and biotechnology exports as America works to increase food safety.

**Strategic Goal 4:** Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious and balanced meals.

**Management Initiative IV:** Leverage USDA Departmental management to increase performance, efficiency and alignment

### **APHIS**

**Strategic Goal 1:** Support rural communities.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Protect forests, range and private lands.

**Strategic Goal 3:** Expand opportunities to develop and trade safe agricultural products, including biotechnology-derived agricultural products.

**Strategic Goal 4:** Minimize and prevent damage to the U.S. food supply caused by plant and animal pests and diseases.

**Management Initiative II:** Improve the timeliness and/or cost effectiveness of APHIS products and services.

**Management Initiative 1:** Improve the quality, communication and implementation of the decisions made in PPQ.

**Links to:**

## USDA

**Strategic Goal 1:** Assist Rural Communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Ensure our National Forests and Private Working Lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

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**Strategic Goal 1:** Support rural communities.

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**Strategic Goal 3:** Expand opportunities to develop and trade safe agricultural products, including biotechnology-derived agricultural products.

**Strategic Goal 4:** Minimize and prevent damage to the U.S. food supply caused by plant and animal pests and diseases.

**Management Initiative 4:** Use transparent principles and processes to make and implement decisions.

**Management Initiative 2:** Achieve the vision for PPQ to become the employer of choice as a "recognized leader dedicated to creating and sustaining a diverse workforce and positive work environment, valuing all employees and instilling in them a sense of true belonging as they provide fair and impartial program delivery."

## Links to:

### USDA

**Overarching Principle:** *Everyday in Every way*

*USDA's constituents understand and appreciate what the agency can do for them every day in every way because USDA employees are engaged, valued and productively serving the people of America and the world.*

**Management Initiative I:** Engage USDA employees to transform USDA into a model agency

**Management Initiative II:** Provide civil rights services to Agriculture employees and customers

### APHIS

**Management Initiative I:** Strengthen leadership, promote open communication, and engage and develop employees.

**Management Initiative 2:** Provide civil rights services to APHIS employees and customers.

Management Initiative 3: Build the capacity of PPQ's workforce is able to successfully meet current and future program challenges.

Links to:

#### USDA

Overarching Principle: *Everyday in Every way*

*USDA's constituents understand and appreciate what the agency can do for them every day in every way because USDA employees are engaged, valued and productively serving the people of America and the world.*

Management Initiative VIII: Enhance the USDA Human Resources process to recruit and hire skilled, diverse individuals to meet the program needs of USDA

#### APHIS

Management Initiative I: Strengthen leadership, promote open communication, and engage and develop employees.

Management Initiative 3: Improve the timeliness and/or cost effectiveness of APHIS products and services.

Management Initiative 4: Streamline PPQ's Administrative and Program work processes to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of PPQ's program functions and operations.

Links to:

#### USDA

Management Initiative IV: Leverage USDA Departmental management to increase performance, efficiency and alignment

#### APHIS

Management Initiative 3: Improve the timeliness and/or cost effectiveness of APHIS products and services.

Management Initiative 5: Ensure PPQ's Information Technology (IT) data systems are fully integrated with its business processes and optimize the accessibility and accuracy of information that PPQ employees need to perform their jobs.

Links to:

#### USDA

Management Initiative V: Optimize Information Technology (IT) Policy and Applications

**APHIS**

**Management Initiative 3:** Improve the timeliness and/or cost effectiveness of APHIS products and services.

**Management Initiative 6: Reduce PPQ's Carbon Footprint**

**Links to:**

**USDA**

**Strategic Goal 2:** Ensure our National Forests and Private Working Lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

**Management Initiative VI:** Optimize USDA "green" or sustainable operations.

**APHIS**

**Management Initiative 3:** Improve the timeliness and/or cost effectiveness of APHIS products and services.



# APPENDIX A

*The PPQ Executive Team's Response to  
the Plant Health Strategies Task Force  
Recommendations*

*February 19, 2010*

# Flexible, Inclusive, and Decisive: PPQ Advances a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Plant Health System

## Introduction:

Amid growing concern about the sustainability of the U.S plant health safeguarding system, the Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Executive Team formed the Plant Health Strategies Task Force in the fall of 2008 to assess the most important strategic challenges facing PPQ and recommend ways to address them. The Executive Team recognized that, in a world of evolving plant health threats, PPQ must evolve as an organization in order to remain successful in safeguarding U.S. agriculture and natural resources from the risks associated with the entry, establishment, and/or spread of plant pests and noxious weeds.

The Task Force found that the current plant health safeguarding system is severely strained by a number of challenges. These include:

- The increasing number, variety, and complexity of plant health issues. The continued growth of global trade and travel has created new pathways for the movement of an increasing number of invasive plant pests and pathogens into the United States.
- Flat or decreasing Federal budgets. In the current budgetary climate, efforts must be reprioritized and priorities continually reevaluated to ensure that resources are used wisely to address issues of national concern.
- New and non-traditional stakeholder groups. Organic and sustainable agricultural communities, along with urban/suburban communities and the general public, have become increasingly interested and vocal stakeholders for PPQ activities. These groups have values that may differ from those that guide PPQ's current emergency response approaches.

Faced with these and other challenges, PPQ must respond and take proactive steps to maintain and strengthen its leadership as the Nation's plant health authority. Accordingly, the Plant Health Strategies Task Force made a number of recommendations, organized around six key areas of focus. Together, they are intended to enhance PPQ's identification of and response to critical plant health issues.

The PPQ Executive Team has carefully reviewed the Task Force's recommendations, and subsequently shared them with and sought input from the National Plant Board and the National Association of Plant Protection and Quarantine Managers. Finding broad support for the recommendations, the Executive Team is now sharing them more widely with the entire PPQ organization and diverse stakeholder groups. As we move forward with efforts to transform PPQ to meet the plant health challenges of tomorrow, the input and engagement of employees and stakeholders will be critical.

This document highlights the major areas of focus and change for the PPQ organization identified as a result of the Task Force work. (Task Force recommendations are available in their entirety at <http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/da/php-strategies-tf.shtml>. Executive Team members have agreed to champion the recommendations for each of the Task Force's six areas of focus. The Primary Executive Team Champion and Co-Champions identified

below serve as points of contact for each area and are leading efforts to identify and implement action steps.

### **1) A New Framework: Ensuring That Decisions are Effective, Inclusive, and Informed**

*Primary Executive Team Champion:* Bill Wade

*Co-Champions:* Rebecca Bech and Phil Berger

The Task Force concluded that enhancing the PPQ decisionmaking process, as well as the organization's mechanisms for communicating and implementing decisions, is central to addressing many of PPQ's current challenges.

In recent years it has become clear that the factors PPQ must consider when deciding how to respond to new plant health issues are ever growing and increasingly complex. This is especially true in the area of stakeholder input. For example, if PPQ fails to identify non-traditional stakeholders, or learns of their concerns later rather than sooner, an emergency response can be slowed if not stopped altogether by legal or other challenges, while public trust is eroded.

At the same time, the growing number and biological diversity of global pest threats presents a challenge for PPQ. There is no single, "one-size-fits-all" prevention or response strategy for these many pests. Gathering the information needed to accurately assess a potential new threat, and assessing the practicality and availability of tools for survey and control, are increasingly complex undertakings. In addition, the potential economic, environmental, and trade impacts of an introduction must be weighed against the projected costs of a response effort and the diversion of resources from other priorities. Successful outcomes often depend on quickly making and implementing decisions; as a result, the pressure to make a timely decision adds to the difficulty of the decisionmaking process.

In spite of many worthwhile management initiatives, PPQ's process for deciding whether and how to respond to plant health issues has not kept pace with the challenge of collecting and weighing these multiple decisionmaking inputs. While this is particularly true with regard to responding to plant health emergencies, it is also the case in other situations, such as addressing a new development in an ongoing pest management program, or evaluating a trade request that opens a potential new pest risk pathway. The Plant Health Strategies Task Force concluded that PPQ's decisionmaking process should be improved to ensure that numerous factors, including diverse stakeholder perspectives, were identified and weighed earlier in the process. The Task Force also highlighted the need for a decisionmaking process that does not automatically equate emergency response with eradication, and that allows for frequent review of current responses so that alternative courses of action, including exit strategies, can be considered.

Consistent with the Task Force’s recommendation, the Executive Team has recently adopted a decision framework that includes a new decisionmaking model, as well as a coordination function. Documents describing the decision model can also be found on the Website. The purpose of the coordination function is to ensure that the decision model is accessible to and updated by the multiple PPQ staffs and units involved in decisionmaking.

The Executive Team believes that good public policy decisions for PPQ must be timely, accurate, and relevant and take into consideration social science, costs versus benefits, environmental impacts, the views of both traditional and non-traditional stakeholders, and other factors that go beyond the biological sciences. The new decision model broadens the input that informs decisions so that the perspectives of all impacted stakeholders are considered early in the process. The Executive Team envisions PPQ employees at every level actively engaging traditional and non-traditional stakeholders on a more routine basis, and incorporating what they learn into the model before and after decisions are made. The new decisionmaking model will help PPQ become an organization:

- That is both proactive and nimble, collecting all available, relevant information early on, and adapting when new input indicates that a different course of action might be in order;
- Where decisionmaking is thorough and inclusive, taking into account all of our stakeholders—including those whose primary concern is not the impact a pest will have on a commodity or an industry, but rather the social, economic, or environmental impact of an emergency response on natural resources or communities;
- That relies on biological science as an important factor, but not the only factor, in decisions; and
- Where decisions can be swift without compromising the quality or breadth of information considered when making them.

The Executive Team is responsible for the decision coordination function, which will largely entail identifying any gaps in needed information and following up with the appropriate PPQ staff or unit to supply the information. As part of this coordination, the Executive Team will establish a Web site where decision documents are archived and can be accessed by PPQ employees. The coordination function will also look at how to better share information about decisionmaking with stakeholders and establish effective feedback mechanisms for both employees and external stakeholders.

## **2) Optimizing Offshore Efforts to More Strategically Preempt Threats**

*Primary Executive Team Champion:* John Payne

*Co-Champions:* Alan Green and Paul Eggert

The Task Force recommended that PPQ consolidate and optimize its offshore initiatives to better target high-priority pests *before* they become an immediate threat to the United States. The PPQ Executive Team believes that accurate, integrated information about offshore plant health threats plays an important role in PPQ decisionmaking and

prioritization of resources and efforts. The Task Force has identified ways the organization can better leverage Agency resources and existing mechanisms to optimize the collection and analysis of offshore plant health threat information. In particular, PPQ can make better use of the successful Offshore Pest Information Program initiative by expanding the amount and kind of information it receives from APHIS' International Services (IS) program.

With employees stationed in more than 40 foreign countries, IS has the opportunity to obtain first-hand information about plant health issues and infrastructure in many international locations. By better communicating its offshore priorities and information needs to IS, PPQ will work to increase the amount and utility of information it obtains about offshore plant health threats from IS employees. Enhanced understanding will help PPQ better allocate its resources to fight those pests that are most likely to threaten plant health in the United States. To support this effort, the PPQ Executive Team will ensure that IS employees have the necessary support and direction to collect information strategically and work effectively with PPQ to address plant health concerns at their origin.

In addition to working to enhance the collection, analysis, and sharing of offshore information, PPQ will proactively identify and act on more opportunities to engage in offshore exclusion activities. These activities include preclearance programs, systems approaches, and broadly effective treatments like irradiation.

Optimizing offshore efforts will help prioritize PPQ's work to preempt pest threats before they arrive on U.S. shores and will better position PPQ to identify and address the pests posing the most immediate threat.

### **3) Continually Prioritizing Plant Health Threats to Better Utilize Resources**

*Primary Executive Team Champion:* David Kaplan

*Co-Champions:* Alan Green and Phil Berger

The Global Invasive Species Database lists about 150 species threatening North America. That number will only increase as globalization and international trade do the same. With its current resources, PPQ cannot effectively plan or be prepared for all potential plant health threats. PPQ must be strategic and, now more than ever, prioritize plant pest threats. To accomplish this, the Task Force recommended that PPQ develop and apply a standard ranking model to a list of candidate species.

Once the highest priority pests are identified, PPQ will develop guidelines for preventing and responding to these potential threats. With clear guidelines prepared in advance, PPQ and its partners will be better positioned to move rapidly to address priority pests that imminently threaten or reach our shores.

The Executive Team agrees with the Task Force that the guidelines should:

- be informed by the cross-functional expertise of scientists, economists, regulatory experts, stakeholders, and cooperators;
- address all prevention and response strategies;
- evaluate the feasibility and probability of eradication at various pest thresholds; and
- include potential exit strategies.

The guidelines should also identify any deficiencies in PPQ's response capabilities, such as gaps in diagnostic and detection technologies, and include action plans to address these gaps.

Implementing the Task Force's recommendations will make PPQ's approach to pest prioritization more proactive and systematic. In the event of a plant health incident, the guidelines will minimize the need for planning and analysis, allowing valuable time and resources to be devoted more quickly to response or mitigation efforts. Having descriptive guidelines available up front will give PPQ an earlier start on preventing or eradicating the pests when it can, and anticipating and preparing stakeholders when it cannot. Soybean rust is an example of a pest that PPQ knew early on posed a threat to U.S. plant health, but also knew could not be kept out of the United States. As a result of collaborative efforts involving PPQ, other USDA agencies, and the soybean industry, PPQ and its stakeholders were prepared when this organism and its vector arrived in the United States and able to avert potentially devastating damage.

#### **4) Engaging a Broader Network and Building a Better Consensus**

*Primary Executive Team Champion:* Vic Harabin

*Co-Champions:* Rebecca Bech and Alan Green

To be able to develop effective policies and response strategies, PPQ managers need to be able to quickly identify and work with all stakeholder groups potentially impacted by a newly detected pest and/or the proposed response to that pest. Accordingly, PPQ must expand communication and collaboration efforts to reach—and better account for the views of—all parties potentially impacted by PPQ programs, including non-traditional stakeholders.

Plant pest outbreaks in recent years have clearly demonstrated that there are many more stakeholders for PPQ programs than previously identified, particularly when the program impacts urban/suburban areas. For example, in the case of light brown apple moth, urban residents who objected to the aerial dispersal of pheromones over their homes engaged in grassroots activism and legal action that ultimately resulted in suspension of one of the control measures. In a program such as the one for Asian longhorned beetle, individuals who are personally impacted by tree removal efforts on their properties or in their local communities/parks is another constituency. These stakeholders may have limited awareness of invasive species issues, or may think the cost of a traditional emergency response effort such as tree removal outweighs the benefit. Without actively reaching out to and engaging nontraditional stakeholders like these—something that has been done

inconsistently and not always effectively in the past—PPQ will continue to face significant obstacles to accomplishing its mission.

By increasing public awareness about the damage invasive species can cause to U.S. agriculture and natural resources, PPQ will promote increased understanding of its mission and goals, with potentially fewer challenges to its programs. By reaching out and building strategic alliances with a wider variety of stakeholders in advance of a new plant health incident, the program will create a larger network to tap into and more readily build consensus with if and when a threat arises. Finally, by engaging and more thoroughly considering the perspectives of all stakeholders, PPQ will be able to build response strategies that are socially and economically acceptable to a broader public. The end result will be more successful efforts to address plant health threats.

To reach a broader range of stakeholders, PPQ will explore and leverage new communication tools, such as Web 2.0 (social media) and collaboration tools. Many of these tools have particular usefulness in reaching more dispersed and non-traditional audiences. The Executive Team expects that, to accomplish this expanded outreach and collaboration, employees at every level will play a role. To that end, the fifth strategic area of focus for PPQ (below) is centered around equipping employees at every level within PPQ to be ambassadors for the organization, helping to engage stakeholders, shape policies, and communicate those policies.

## **5) Equipping Employees to Be Effective Ambassadors for PPQ**

*Primary Executive Team Champion:* Phil Garcia

*Co-Champion:* Paula Henstridge

The scope of plant pest issues and the broad range of potentially affected stakeholders demand that PPQ employees—especially those who interact regularly with the public—play active roles in formulating and communicating policies and programs. To the extent possible, policies and plans should be developed in partnership with State counterparts, and in consultation with external program stakeholders. In order for this to happen, it is important that PPQ employees work to build relations with potential stakeholders and members of the public in their communities in advance of a pest incidence, so that when issues do arise, there is a solid network of relations already in place. Because program activities are often felt most directly at the local level, it is vitally important that employees in regional/State/field locations seek out and build relationships with potential stakeholders locally.

The Executive Team's goal is to equip PPQ employees at all levels to be ambassadors capable of conveying program policy, soliciting feedback from a broad range of stakeholders, and ensuring that Agency decisionmakers factor disparate perspectives into the decisionmaking process. The Executive Team is committed to providing employees the training, guidance, and mentoring opportunities they need to help accomplish these ends.

In concert with developing employees' leadership competencies in areas such as external awareness and political savvy, PPQ will provide training in the use of new communications technologies to effectively share information, communicate organizational policies, and solicit stakeholder input. Another goal is to equip employees with the tools to be able to identify and assess socio-economic implications of actions and factor them appropriately into program objectives and strategies. The Executive Team will work to establish clear expectations of employee roles in these areas.

With employees at all levels playing a role in communicating with stakeholders, PPQ will magnify its outreach efforts significantly. More importantly, equipping employees to effectively engage and consult with stakeholders will allow the program to increase the volume and quality of information that feeds into its decision process for responding to plant health issues. This in turn will result in better decisions that are more likely to receive broad stakeholder/public support. By increasing employees' role in developing and communicating policy decisions, PPQ will become a more transparent, collaborative organization, both internally and in relation to its external stakeholders.

## **6) Second to None: Utilizing the Best Scientific Expertise and the Most Up-to-Date Tools**

*Primary Executive Team Champion:* Phil Garcia

*Co-Champion:* Paula Henstridge

PPQ must continually scan the horizon for new and better tools to successfully address plant health issues. This is a perpetual challenge, as the issues are increasingly complex, and science and technology are continually advancing.

Even as PPQ moves to incorporate a broader range of socio-economic and other impacts into its decisionmaking, biological science and sound scientific risk analysis will continue to be a key underpinning of its decisions. Identifying and applying the best available biological science is critical to addressing plant health threats. For example, scientific advancements can provide new tools that more accurately predict new plant pest pathways, better assess the significance of potential threats, provide earlier warnings of new incursions, and give us more effective and/or socially/environmentally acceptable means of preventing or controlling pest spread.

In order to best support PPQ operational decisions, scientific and technological support must not only be high quality, but also timely and applicable to the operational problems at hand. In recent years, PPQ has made progress in this regard, in part by more effectively engaging its Center for Plant Health Science and Technology (CPHST) scientists in operational activities. The PPQ Executive Team supports the Task Force recommendations for continuing this progress. These recommendations include institutionalizing protocols to identify and prioritize scientific and technical needs among all PPQ programs competing for CPHST resources; and establishing project tracking and other mechanisms that enable PPQ staff to regularly review progress on efforts and discuss status and/or changing needs and priorities.



The more closely scientific and technical advancements are tied to PPQ operational program needs, the more effective programs will be. By enhancing efforts to prioritize and anticipate research and development needs, PPQ will help ensure that the right scientific tools are available when they are required. As we continue to enhance the quality, timeliness, and effectiveness of our scientific and technical efforts, PPQ will benefit from being seen as an organization that employs top-notch, cutting-edge scientific tools and knowledge. In addition, as PPQ continues to develop tools that are not only scientifically advanced but also socially acceptable and economically feasible, the program will gain greater public credibility and support for its efforts. Ultimately, this wider base of trust and support will promote increased success of our plant health programs.

**Conclusion:**

PPQ is the Nation’s plant health authority. The agricultural and natural resources we protect are vast and invaluable; the task before us is immense. Looking forward, PPQ will adhere to the tried and true tenets that have helped us maintain U.S. plant health and robust agricultural industries in the past: collaborating with State partners, working closely with stakeholders, and ensuring that decisions are informed by sound biological science.

At the same time, PPQ must evolve and adapt in order to continue to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We must broaden our definition of our stakeholders, remind ourselves that “emergency response” is not synonymous with eradication, and take into account that “science” encompasses social and economic sciences in addition to biological science. There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to address the increasing, and increasingly complex, plant health threats we face. But by more proactively collecting information and being attuned to disparate stakeholder perspectives on a routine basis, PPQ can develop a more systematic approach to prioritizing pests. We can make decisions in a more inclusive, informed way without compromising the speed with which we determine how and whether to respond. We can also be ready to change course when new information indicates that a different approach is in order.

The PPQ of the future relies on a robust, but flexible, decisionmaking process for plant health issues, and clearly and consistently communicates decisions made to both employees and stakeholders. Decisions are timely, accurate, and relevant—taking into consideration costs versus benefits, environmental impacts, social perspectives, as well as the best available science. With the involvement of employees at all levels, we work to ensure that the perspectives of all potentially impacted and interested stakeholders—both traditional and non-traditional—are sought and considered. Advance planning ensures that PPQ is prepared for the most likely and critical plant health threats, and enhanced efforts offshore help stop plant health threats before they reach our borders. Finally, collaborative partnerships with a variety of concerned stakeholders enable us to effectively carry out our mission, safeguarding U.S. agriculture and natural resources from a wide variety of invasive plant pests.

The engagement of PPQ employees at every level is vital to our success in continuing to lead our Nation's plant health efforts. The Executive Team will provide the training and support that employees need to be effective ambassadors for PPQ, and will provide quarterly updates reporting on the status of progress in each area of focus. Similarly, the involvement of our many longstanding partners and stakeholders—as well as new ones—is key. We appreciate the dedication, expertise, and diverse insights of PPQ employees and stakeholders, and look forward to building on these as we enter a new era of plant health safeguarding.

# APPENDIX B

## *USDA Civil Rights Commitment*

The following table represents the USDA Goals, Performance Objectives and Goal Indicators as they pertain to Agency Leadership commitment to improving civil rights in APHIS and PPQ.

Civil Rights Performance and Accomplishment Report			
Goal	Performance Objectives		Goal Indicators
Commitment of Agency Leadership/ Strategic Integration	Leadership	Held managers, supervisors and other employees accountable for ensuring that USDA's customers and employees were treated in accordance with USDA'S civil rights policy and applicable legal requirements.	<p>APHIS commitments to USDA's civil rights goals and obligations are Included in the Strategic Plan. The commitment includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employees are notified of the requirements of Departmental Regulation (DR) 4300-010, "Civil Rights Accountability Policy and Procedures," issued January 18, 2006.</li> <li>2. Annual performance appraisals for managers and supervisors include an evaluation of their contributions to USDA's commitment to civile rights and equal opportunity, and adherence to civil rights policy.</li> <li>3. A representative sampling of performance plans (signed copy) shows evidence of EEO elements for all levels</li> <li>4. Provide a list and identify finding of each employee case where disciplinary action or corrective action was taken relating to civil rights or retaliation and indicate the timeframe in which the action was taken.</li> <li>5. APHIS submits succinct narrative rationale with documented evidence to determine compliance with the above indicators using the appropriate scoring elements.</li> </ol>
Secretary's Commitment	Secretary's Commitment	Took affirmative steps to implement each of the areas illustrated by the Secretary.	<p>APHIS implements Secretary's Commitment:</p> <p>The Secretary's commitment of successful transformation includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An inclusive workplace environment where there is equity of opportunity and all employees are empowered to reach their full potential</li> <li>2. Modernization of technology and systems that will enable us to provide the highest level of service;</li> <li>3. A commitment by USDA employees to improving USDA's past and future record of civil rights, including expanding outreach efforts to socially-disadvantaged farmers and ranchers;</li> <li>4. Systems of accountability that encourage all employees to achieve high standards of performance and customer service; and</li> <li>5. A renewed commitment to creating diversity in the workforce and succession planning.</li> </ol>
Implementation of Secretary's Commitment	Agency's Commitment to Diversity	Took Affirmative steps to implement each of the six (6) component areas illustrated by Diversity Road Map and ensured that goals and timelines are accomplished accordingly.	<p>APHIS Implements the Diversity Road Map to meet all requirements and timelines</p> <p>USDA's Diversity Road Map has specific goals, activities, and timelines, organized around the following (6) components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership Accountability and Commitment</li> <li>2. Outreach and Partnerships</li> <li>3. Recruitment and Hiring</li> <li>4. Retention and Promotion</li> <li>5. Diversity Training and Awareness</li> <li>6. Employee Development and Recognition</li> </ol>

# APPENDIX C

## *Acronym Dictionary*

ADODR	Authorized Departmental Officer's Designated Representative (U.S. Government)
AG	Administrative Grievance (U.S. Government)
APHIS	Animal Plant Health and Inspection Service (USDA)
ARM	Agricultural Risk System (PPQ)
ARS	Agricultural Research Service (USDA)
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs (U.S. Government)
CAPS	Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (PPQ)
CBP	Customs & Border Protection (DHS)
CCC	Commodity Credit Corporation (USDA)
CHRP	Citrus Health Response Plan (PPQ)
CPHST	Center for Plant Health Science and Technology (PPQ)
COAC	Commercial Operations Advisory Committee (CBP)
CPR	Conflict Prevention and Resolution (APHIS)
CR	Civil Rights
CY	Calendar Year
DHS	Department of Homeland Security (U.S. Government)
DOD	Department of Defense (U.S. Government)
DOI	Department of Interior (U.S. Government)
EDP	Emergency and Domestic Programs (PPQ)
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EMF	Emergency Management Framework (PPQ)
EMSSD	Emergency Management Safety and Security Division (APHIS)
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. Government)
EPPO	European Plant Protection Organization
ERS	Economic Research Service (USDA)
FAC	Food and Agriculture Council (USDA)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
FAS	Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration (U.S. Government)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency (U.S. Government)
FRSMP	Federally Recognized State Managed Phytosanitary Program (Pronounced "Free Stamp": PPQ)
FS	Forest Service (USDA)
FSIS	Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA)
FY	Fiscal Year
GCSI	Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative (PPQ)
GIS	Geographic Information System
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism

HQ	Headquarters
ICS	Incident Command System
IES	Investigative and Enforcement Services (APHIS)
IMT	Incident Management Team
IPHIS	Integrated Plant Health Information System (PPQ)
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
IT	Information Technology
ITDS	International Trade Data System (CBP)
LPA	Legislative and Public Affairs (APHIS)
NAPPO	North American Plant Protection Organization
NAPPRA	Not Authorized Pending Pest Risk Assessment (PPQ)
NARP	National Agriculture Release Program (PPQ)
NASDA	National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
NEI	National Export Initiative
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NISC	National Invasive Species Council (DOI)
NIFA	National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA)
NPAG	New Pest Advisory Group (PPQ)
NPB	National Plant Board
NPPO	National Plant Protection Organization
NRO	National Recruitment and Outreach (PPQ)
OIC	Officer in Charge
OPAG	Ongoing Pest Advisory Group (PPQ)
OPIP	Offshore Pest Information Program (PPQ)
OPM	Office of Personnel Management (U.S. Government)
PCIT	Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance and Tracking (PPQ)
PHP	Plant Health Programs (PPQ)
PHSTF	Plant Health Strategies Task Force (PPQ)
PIS	Plant Inspection Station (PPQ)
POE	Port of Entry
PPQ	Plant Protection and Quarantine (APHIS/USDA)
PSS	Pest Survey Specialists (PPQ)
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
RMA	Risk Management Agency (USDA)

SEB	State Emergency Board
Section 10201	“Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention” of the 2008 Farm Bill (PPQ)
SEP	Special Emphasis Program
SEPM	Special Emphasis Program Manager (APHIS)
SF-52	Standard Form # 52
SITC	Smuggling Interdiction and Trade Compliance (PPQ)
SPHD	State Plant Health Director (PPQ)
SPRO	State Plant Regulatory Official
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TDY	Temporary Duty
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development (U.S. Government)
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S. Government)
USTR	U.S. Trade Representative (U.S. Government)
VMO	Veterinary Medical Officer (APHIS)
VRS	Veterinary Regulatory Services (PPQ)
VS	Veterinary Services (APHIS)
WTO	World Trade Organization