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# 2012 Agriculture Stakeholder Conference

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Day 1 Panel Discussion:  
Plant Pest and Foreign  
Animal Disease  
Exclusion, Agricultural  
Stewardship, and  
Leveraging Resources

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Tuesday July 17, 2012

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# 2012 Agriculture Stakeholder Conference

## Panel Discussion: Tuesday July 17, 2012

### 10:55 am – 12:00 pm Panel Discussion –Plant Pest and Foreign Animal Disease Exclusion, Agriculture Stewardship, and Leveraging Resources

- ❖ Joel Nelson, California Citrus Mutual
- ❖ Geoff Powell, CH Powell Company
- ❖ Craig Regelbrugge, American Nursery and Landscape Association (ANLA)
- ❖ Liz Wagstrom, National Pork Producers Council

*Outcome of panel discussion:* Achieve a better understanding of how to leverage combined resources to safeguard American agriculture and natural resources.

#### **Joel Nelson, California Citrus Mutual:**

The biggest challenges to the California citrus industry are phytosanitary barriers to selling, moving, and exporting their products and having to compete with imported produce. The California citrus industry requires a unique partnership with CBP and APHIS to address these challenges. We must remember that producers are the victims of pests and invasive species.

#### *What's working?*

- The Citrus Health Response Program (CHRP) is the definition of what a true partnership should be between the federal government and the three citrus producing states (CA, FL, TX).
  - California mandates eradication, not control, suppression, or management of huanglongbing (HLB)/citrus greening (CG) or its vector, the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP).
  - The California citrus industry assesses itself for citrus pests and diseases and funds research programs.
  - The California citrus industry will make the necessary commitment to be a valued partner in order to have input in establishing policy. While industry may not always agree on how government resources are utilized, it still must have a seat at the table.
  - Some suggest that the role of protecting agriculture is solely the government's duty and that the California citrus industry should not be involved, however, resources are no longer there. Industry must engage at the appropriate level in order to achieve the best results.
  - If no cooperation from homeowner/citizen, must provide outreach on the severity of the issue to the general public. CHRP money devoted to consumer education.
  - And what about the next disease? HLB is the one in front of us, but what about the next one?

#### *Areas for improvement?*

- USDA's main focus should not be to facilitate trade; it should be to protect domestic agriculture.

*Feedback:* APHIS/CBP should facilitate *legitimate* trade while keeping pests out and protecting agriculture and natural resources.

*Nelson:* With the passing of the Plant Protection Act (PPA), USDA was given more authority to determine which products can come in from which country. The PPA gave criteria to bring products in from a pest-infested area, as long as production facility was

# 2012 Agriculture Stakeholder Conference

clean. This created a greater scientific burden on USDA, as more products entered the country; a greater burden was placed on inspection programs. Bottom line: we want to strengthen and enhance trade and movement of goods, but we created our own problem.

- Industry must have access to data to identify trends and help identify areas of success and areas for improvement.

Question: If we are seeing increasing rates of pests, diseases, and infestations, then something isn't working right. Perhaps something is wrong with the Pest Risk Assessment process or border inspections?

## **Geoff Powell, CH Powell Company:**

Customs brokers are licensed by CBP to expedite trade and assist importers by liaising with government agencies. Brokers act as a force multiplier.

### *What's working?*

- The Commercial Operations Advisory Committee (COAC) is “a 20-member advisory council that represents importers, carriers, customs brokers and port authorities. Its purpose is to provide advice to the Departments of the Treasury and Homeland Security on trade compliance and facilitation, the securing of the supply chain and other trade and security issues of mutual concern.”
  - Four key issues were brought up to the COAC agriculture subcommittee in 2008:
    - **Lacey Act:** wanted to ensure that importers understood, could meet, and were adhering to the new regulations.
    - **Carrier contamination:**
      - What can be done to address the Asian gypsy moth (AGM) problem before the ships arrive at U.S. ports?
        - *Answer:* On-board training on vessels, training placards on ships to address AGM, and eradication on ships to expedite cargo
    - **Wood packing material (WPM):** What should importers do if their containers had infested WPM but already passed by inspection activities at the ports?
    - **Information and statistics dissemination:** what information is needed, when is it needed, what information can be shared, how and how often do stakeholders want the information?

### *Areas for improvement?*

- How do we stop pests?
  - Put the onus on the importer to secure supply chain.
  - Increased penalties on WPM; must get word out to importers.
  - Use brokers to communicate new regulations to their clients.
  - Eliminate delays by streamlining paperwork requirements. Should not have to send paperwork to both APHIS and CBP.

## **Audience feedback:**

# 2012 Agriculture Stakeholder Conference

## *What's working?*

- The seed industry provides outreach to schools by generating materials for teachers and utilizing social media. The idea is that if you get to young minds early, the message becomes ingrained and also passed onto parents.

## *Areas for improvement:*

- If WPM comes in noncompliant, it should be allowed to go to a treatment facility in the United States. Re-exportation is a terrible, punitive action.
- Why are we still using paper and not electronic means of tracking? Need a secured, digital paper trail.

*Powell:* CBP is developing the Automated Commercial Environment and the International Trade Data System. This will be a cloud where all information will be available to government agencies. Additionally, six to eight months ago, CBP announced the ability to post documents on a website in lieu of submitting a paper form.

- Stakeholders should be involved and outside subject matter experts should be consulted on the front end of new trade agreements to increase comfort level.

*Nelson:* State liaisons help strengthen the relationship between industry and CBP, but CBP needs to give information on a timely basis. The private sector cannot leverage resources if it doesn't have the appropriate information.

- Need to have a single, unifying catchphrase for all communications (i.e. "Don't Pack a Pest").

## *Other comments:*

- Please define what you consider a 'partnership' with the federal government.

*Nelson:* Mutual level of respect to create right environment for ultimate objective. In the case of CHRP, the California citrus industry used the experiences gained from Florida and improved upon them. California placed the responsibility of assessment on the producers in case the government could not do the job. Bottom line: industry will fill voids to create a comprehensive, effective program.

- *Regelbrugge to Nelson:* Where do you see the citrus industry in 25 years and how will you measure if your vision was achieved?

*Nelson:*

- CA: The domestic fresh industry (dominated by lemons, seedless mandarins, and navel oranges) will primarily originate from CA, with product moving from the end of September to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.
- Plan to see reductions in fresh production in Texas and Florida. In 5-10 years, will see reductions in juice production from Florida due to diseases and the inability to move product.

*Feedback:* China has been battling ACP/CG for years and citrus production has not failed.

*Nelson:* The United States cannot move citrus producing areas, different dynamics in China as to their ability to survive HLB. The U.S. needs to do a better job of messaging to the general public to be cooperative, speak language, and get them on board. [As a result of public focus groups, California uses the term huanglongbing instead of citrus greening.]

# 2012 Agriculture Stakeholder Conference

- The California citrus industry is not interested in funding publications about other pests/industries/commodities.

*Nelson:* Citrus is first and foremost, but did not mean to say was not interested in other industries. The citrus industry had to put firewalls in place to ensure that it was not the only industry with the financial mechanisms to create solutions.

## Panel Discussion continued:

**1:15 pm – 2:15 pm      Panel Discussion (con't) –Plant Pest and Foreign Animal Disease Exclusion, Agriculture Stewardship, and Leveraging Resources;**

- ❖ Craig Regelbrugge, ANLA
- ❖ Liz Wagstrom, National Pork Producers Council
- ❖ Joel Nelson, California Citrus Mutual
- ❖ Geoff Powell, CH Powell Company

### **Craig Regelbrugge, American Nursery and Landscape Association:**

The nursery industry is dominated by small and family businesses, making the various groups hard to bring together at times. This industry is both a victim and vector of foreign pests and diseases.

The ANLA thinks of APHIS and CBP as a gatekeeper with a fundamentally important job to do. It's in industry's interest to make sure gatekeeper is strong and smart. The nursery industry is regulated differently than many other industries. Plant imports are referred onto Plant Inspection Stations. The relationship with CBP functions as a front line of defense.

The Plant Safeguarding Review pulled together 60 subject matter experts to develop over 300 recommendations to modernize pest exclusion and response functions under APHIS. However, on the way to implementation of these recommendations, 9/11 occurred. This event led to the creation of DHS-CBP and fears manifested themselves as legislation that would move the plant inspection function back under USDA.

#### *What's working?*

- The Greenhouse Certification Program
- The National Clean Plant Network: helped us beef up capacity in several centers to handle germplasm of high-value nursery crops (apples, berries, citrus). Infrastructure is addressing phytosanitary issues in a forward thinking way.
- NAPPRA: allows USDA to be more responsive. There is a little fear and trepidation from industry, but generally supportive of the concept.

#### *Areas for improvement:*

- Nursery Certification Program: Only 6 cooperating facilities on each side of the border. Revisit and review the U.S. Nursery Certification Program so it can become more widely adopted. The barriers to getting in the program are too high.
  - There is a tangible incentive to joining the program only if the nursery is trading enough with Canada and can self-issue shipping documents, saving time and money.

# 2012 Agriculture Stakeholder Conference

- Great evolution in thinking with regard to critical control points and practices that can be applied at those points to achieve pest freedom.
- Propagative Monitoring Release Program: APHIS should focus more inspection resources on higher risk material. This has been challenging in the short term as the program has been set up for failure. A lot of things are defaulting to a higher risk category (for example, mixed loads, or different plants in the same box) resulting in 100% inspection, which leads to spoilage of highly perishable items.
- Recognize good shippers and treat them appropriately.
- Involve stakeholders sooner in regulatory consultation to make input more meaningful. Give stakeholders the ability to be consulted in an informal way to improve results.

Relations with Canada, two options:

- Perimeter approach: 'have each others' backs' (adopted by the Regulatory Cooperation Council, for more information, click [here](#) for the RCC's Perimeter Approach to Plant Protection document)
- Build up personnel on the border and regulate more

Closing: Problems arise when well-intended regulators are not in exquisitely close communication with well-intended importers and business owners. The nursery and landscape industry will unify to make relations with government easier.

## **Liz Wagstrom, National Pork Producers Council:**

Diseases that may come in will have animal health impacts, but greater impact is the United States' ability to export animal products. For example, 27% of all pork produced in the U.S. was exported, totaling approximately \$6 billion per year. There is a greater risk from foreign animal disease today than any other time in history. For example, an introduction of a foreign animal disease would cost the animal livestock industry over \$20 billion. There are more foot and mouth disease countries today than in 2001 and we have seen more FMD outbreaks in island countries. If FMD escaped from the laboratory in the U.S., costs (not including clean-up) could range from \$16-\$140 billion. Smuggled ethnic food is a huge risk to animal agriculture and CBP is critical for protecting the animal agriculture industry and the viability of U.S. herd. Prevention is key.

*What's working?*

- Port tours for producer leadership to learn about CBP activities, aid collaboration, and strategies for leveraging resources.

*Areas for improvement:*

- Increased outreach to air and cruise lines about the risks posed by hand luggage:
  - Cruise ships go to countries with actively swirling classical swine fever (i.e. Dominican Republic). While garbage is well-regulated, hand luggage is a concern. Unaware of the risk they could present.
  - Airlines: risks posed by passengers through transport of host material via handbags and luggage. Requirement to educate passengers about the risks involved with what they may be carrying.

# 2012 Agriculture Stakeholder Conference

- Resistance from airlines and cruise ships to use resources to educate their customers/travelers. Stated it was not their responsibility to protect U.S. agriculture.
- Suggestion: Totally ban agricultural products brought into the country via handbags and luggage.
- African swine fever moving throughout Russia and Eastern Europe. How do we work with CBP to adapt to people coming out of countries that were not previously considering high risk? How are risks communicated to CBP and how well does CBP understand and respond to increased risks?
- First line of defense should be at the country of origin. APHIS and CBP should engage plant scientists and vets in those home countries to form multiple hurdles against the introduction of diseases.
- Post-entry activities: surveillance, lab analysis, timely response. While CBP prevention is pivotal, pork industry relies heavily on domestic programs and emergency planning efforts.
- Work together to reduce delays.

## *Concerns:*

- Budget reductions
- Adequate resources for post-entry activities

## **Audience feedback:**

### *Other comments:*

- Florida, with Farm Bill Section 10201 funding, launched a renewed effort of the “Don’t Pack a Pest” program, which cuts across both plant and animal issues. Ports and offshore locations are happy to use and distribute a high-quality outreach product.  
*Regelbrugge:* As barriers to imports gets higher, greater motivation for “suitcase importers” and hobbyists to smuggle in desired product. Collaborate with transportation industry.
- *Faith Campbell (The Nature Conservancy):* Persuading travel agencies and private companies is longstanding issue with regard to endangered species and CITES issues. The National Invasive Species Council could be engaged to bring in contacts with the travel agencies.
- Impacts are not dissimilar, no matter plant or animal. Once an invasive hits the U.S., exports are impacted because trade partners will refuse to buy the impacted product. Movement is prevented. Need to figure out how to respond to new pest and then convince trade partner that response is effective. Get agencies together to send signal message.  
*Wagstrom:* Comprehensive surveillance. Design a program to take advantage of what you may already be looking at and be robust enough to provide to trading partners degree of certainty that meets their needs for safety.