

## **FY13 Farm Bill Section 10201 Suggestion Submission and Evaluation Process**

### **Questions and Answers (as of December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012)**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is charged with implementing Section 10201 of the 2008 Farm Bill to prevent the introduction or spread of plant pests and diseases that threaten U.S. agriculture and the environment. Under the Farm Bill, APHIS provides funding to strengthen the nation's infrastructure for pest detection and surveillance, identification, and threat mitigation, while working to safeguard the nursery production system.

The following information addresses basic questions regarding the Section 10201 suggestion submission and evaluation process. For more information, visit APHIS' Farm Bill Section 10201 website at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/Section10201>.

#### **❖ How much funding is available in fiscal year (FY) 2013?**

Approximately \$50 million is available in FY13.

#### **❖ What changes to the process have you made from previous years?**

There are minimal changes to the process in FY13:

- The revisions made for the 2009 implementation strategies and the development of categories to help stakeholders identify and develop suggestions that address a critical need or an unexplored opportunity in terms of strengthening prevention, detection, and/or mitigation efforts, will carry forward in FY13 and
- Enhancements to the online process (Metastorm application) allowing real-time access to suggestions by evaluators and State Plant Health Directors and Regulatory Officials.

It is expected that these enhancements will help focus potential suggestions in areas of urgent priority, while providing a more efficient process for soliciting and evaluating suggestions.

#### **❖ How do I submit a suggestion?**

Suggestions must be submitted electronically using the FY13 Farm Bill Suggestion System. Suggestions submitted through other means will not be accepted. Instructions for submitting suggestions are available on APHIS' Farm Bill Section 10201 website.

#### **❖ What should be included in a suggestion?**

In addition to some basic information about the suggestion (such as suggestion title, budget estimate, and contact information of the individual submitting the suggestion), stakeholders should provide the following information when submitting a suggestion:

- How the suggestion aligns with Section 10201 goals, strategies, and categories as defined in the [FY13 Overview of Section 10201 Goals, Strategies, and Categories](#), which is posted on the [APHIS Farm Bill Website](#).
- The potential/expected impact of the suggestion
- The proposed technical approach
- The roles and responsibilities of any cooperators or institutions likely to participate in carrying out the suggestion. *Note:* Federal entities are also required to include the percentage of total budget that would be provided to each non-Federal cooperator or participating institution.
- Relevant prior experience and accomplishments to date for renewing projects.

When constructing a suggestion, stakeholders are also strongly encouraged to consider the evaluation criteria (available on the APHIS Farm Bill Section 10201 website) that will be used during the evaluation process to make sure their suggestion addresses those factors as well.

❖ **Who is eligible to submit a suggestion?**

Federal and State agencies, non-profit organizations, tribes, colleges and universities are all eligible to submit a suggestion.

❖ **May foreign entities submit a suggestion?**

No, but they may work with a domestic entity who may submit a suggestion. The suggestion should describe why it may be necessary to accommodate situations where U.S. Federal or State collaborative interests might need to touch upon foreign collaborators as part of a more comprehensive packet to get work done. If the suggestion is recommended and subsequently approved for support, then the matter of the actual instrument of collaboration might be discussed.

❖ **Can stakeholders submit more than one suggestion?**

There is no limit to the number of suggestions an individual or entity can submit.

❖ **What is the timeline for developing the FY13 Spending Plan?**

Below is the current timeline for the development of the FY13 Spending Plan:

- November 12, 2012                      Suggestion submittal period opens
- December 10, 2012                      Suggestion period closes
- December 10, 2012                      Evaluation process begins
- February 2013 (tentative)              Spending Plan released

❖ **Why has APHIS shortened the open period?**

In an effort to make funds available to cooperators as early as possible in 2012, APHIS has decided to reduce the length of the open period to four weeks. This change is necessary to ensure

that new work can be initiated and funds committed in a responsible manner prior to the end of the Continuing Resolution on March 27, 2013, and to mitigate the risk that ongoing work that merits continuation in FY13 won't suffer as a result of lapsed agreements.

The language in the FY12 appropriations bill funding USDA provided a legislative 'fix' to enable annual CCC funds to be used for administrative expenses, which includes cooperative agreements. The CR carries the FY12 appropriations forward and continues that language only through March 27, 2013. Hence, the urgency to get the funds obligated.

❖ **Once the final Spending Plan is developed, when will APHIS make funds available?**

APHIS anticipates publishing the final FY13 Spending Plan in February 2013 or sooner, if possible. Funds will be made available to cooperators shortly thereafter. Every effort will be made to provide funds to cooperators as quickly as possible, especially in those cases where ongoing work might suffer as a result of a lapsed agreement.

❖ **How will the review process work and what criteria will be used to evaluate suggestions?**

Section 10201 Goal Teams will evaluate all suggestions, regardless of the submitting entity. Teams include representatives from APHIS, the National Plant Board, USDA's Agricultural Research Service, USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA's Forest Service, tribal representatives, and the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance.

All Section 10201 Goal Teams will use the same parent criteria to evaluate the strategic alignment, impact, feasibility, and past performance/best practice/innovation of each suggestion. A detailed definition of each criterion is available on the APHIS Farm Bill Section 10201 website.

After all Section 10201 Goal Teams have completed their evaluations, the Teams will meet to discuss preliminary funding priorities in an effort to identify synergies across goal areas. The Goal Teams will work to ensure that the final Spending Plan addresses critical needs or unexplored opportunities to strengthen prevention, detection, and/or mitigation efforts.

❖ **How will funding decisions be made?**

The Section 10201 Goal Teams have developed criteria that will be used to evaluate new suggestions and to identify ongoing work that merits continued funding. Representatives from the National Plant Board, Specialty Crops Farm Bill Alliance, tribal organizations, and other USDA agencies participated in a process to determine the relative weight of each criterion through a structured process. The weighted criteria will then be used to rate every suggestion. The ratings will inform the creation of a list of suggestions to be considered for funding, but are not the only determinant.

APHIS, National Plant Board, Specialty Crops Farm Bill Alliance, tribal organizations, and other USDA agency representatives will also consider the suggestion slate as a whole, contemplating and identifying potential synergies that might exist between suggestions that are similar in nature or that are submitted under different goals or categories. APHIS will work with cooperators in a manner that achieves the most impact by considering all suggestions collectively before finalizing funding decisions. The intent of seeking suggestions from stakeholders is to facilitate the development of a comprehensive plan to address early pest detection and rapid response that takes into consideration a diversity of expert opinions on the types of efforts and initiatives that are likely to accomplish the goals of Section 10201. Because this is not a grant program, APHIS has significant flexibility to create a spending plan that addresses the goals of Section 10201.

❖ **Do suggestions to continue funding ongoing work have preferred status?**

Suggestions to continue funding ongoing work will be reviewed and evaluated using the same criteria that will be applied to new suggestions. The fact that a suggestion received funding in prior years does not guarantee renewed funding.

❖ **Will some States automatically be given more funding than others?**

States that have frequent incursions of high-consequence plant pests as a result of the number of international ports of entry in the State, the volume of international passenger and cargo entry into the State, the geographic location of the State, and a host range or climate that is conducive to pest establishment, are likely to receive higher levels of funding. That said, a State will not automatically be given a set amount of funding. All decisions regarding the distribution of funding, including decisions about continued funding of ongoing work, will be made in a transparent manner using clearly communicated criteria.

❖ **Can States request funding for programs that are facing reduced funding or defunding at the Federal level?**

The program is not intended to specifically address fiscal challenges. While a cooperator could request funding that meets a need generated by a reduction or loss in funding to a particular program, that suggestion must still meet the requirements for Section 10201 funding.

The FY13 Spending Plan will be organized around six Section 10201 goal areas: enhancing plant pest/disease analysis and survey; targeting domestic inspection activities at vulnerable points in the safeguarding continuum; enhancing and strengthening pest identification and technology; safeguarding nursery production; enhancing mitigation capabilities; and conducting outreach and education about these issues.

For specific information about the potential impact of reduced funding or defunding, contact the specific APHIS program manager.

❖ **What is the percent of allowable overhead that may be charged?**

Universities and Non-profits are entitled to 10% of their negotiated indirect costs or their rate, whichever is less in cooperative agreements. Federal agencies are not held to the 10% rule; however, many agreements are close to this percentage. Rates are negotiated with State entities. These provisions apply to cooperative agreements and not grants. APHIS is not providing any funding under grants.

❖ **Can States have overlapping agreements?**

APHIS can sign overlapping agreements as has been done in the past. Note that the new agreement would be for work that is for the upcoming year (FY13), while the ongoing prior year's agreement finishes work that was funded in the prior year (FY12). In addition, cooperators must submit reports and requests for payment to APHIS separately for each agreement. An important point for overlapping cooperative agreements concerns the work for each. FY13 work cannot be the same work that is being performed for an unfinished FY12 agreement. This means that a cooperator cannot receive FY13 funding to finish FY12 work. FY13 work must be different.

❖ **Can States structure agreements so that they run back-to-back?**

This is an acceptable situation. However, the FY13 agreement must be signed on or before March 27, 2013, and work must begin on or before September 30, 2013. In addition, this situation is warranted when the work funded by the FY12 agreement must be completed in order for the FY13 work to begin. Remember that funds received in FY13 cannot be 'parked' totally for use in FY14 even though the agreement runs for 1 year and will not end until sometime in 2014. Work of some nature (planning, procurement, etc.) has to commence in FY13 with FY13 funding.

❖ **Since the 10201 program began in 2009, what has been accomplished?**

Since the program began in 2009, APHIS has funded more than 1,000 projects in 50 states and two territories. These projects have strengthened our ability to protect American agriculture and natural resources by allowing us to enhance plant pest/disease analysis and survey activities, target domestic inspection activities at vulnerable points in the safeguarding continuum, augment and strengthen pest identification and technology, safeguard nursery production, increase public awareness and understanding of pest threats through education and outreach, and expand mitigation capabilities.

Notable accomplishments include:

- The training of several canine teams for domestic survey detection activities in California. These teams have been deployed at strategic locations to enhance the State's efforts to mitigate pests that escape undetected through ports-of-entry such as at

interstate borders and, in some situations, where deliberate introductions of illegal goods may have occurred.

- The training and deployment of dog teams to monitor critical entry points or interdiction stations in Texas and Florida to detect snails. The snail dog teams are capable of detecting snails much faster than human teams alone and with greater accuracy, resulting not only in improved detection capabilities and increased efficiencies, but also cost savings.
- The deployment of several small, quick, and effective mitigation efforts that reduce the impacts to growers, releasing them from quarantine more quickly and allowing them to get back into production. A few examples are gypsy moth control; mollusk mitigation; fruit fly mitigation in Florida and California; grasshopper mitigation; and plum pox virus eradication in New York State.
- The distribution of effective surveillance tools to States in a timely manner to increase the likelihood of the early detection of exotic pests, including online resources for rapid identification of selected plant pests of regulatory concern; enhanced laboratory capacity and training of cooperators in high-risk States; strategic research on Caribbean pests that threaten the United States; and offshore initiatives to optimize early detection programs.
- The commencement of several cooperative projects to analyze pathways through which specialty crops are vulnerable to exotic invasive pests and to develop risk- and economic-assessment tools to help determine survey and mitigation priorities.