



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

**Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Plant Protection and Quarantine**

Strategic Plan: 2020-2021 (BRIDGE)

Table of contents

Message from the Deputy Administrator	iii
PPQ’s Mission, Vision, and Values	1
Mission.....	1
Vision.....	1
Values.....	1
Driving Forces.....	2
PPQ needs to work with others to safeguard American agriculture	3
PPQ and the APHIS Strategic Plan.....	5
PPQ’s Goals and Objectives	6
Goal 1: Strengthen PPQ’s pest exclusion system.....	7
Goal 2: Optimize PPQ’s domestic pest management and eradication programs.....	8
Goal 3: Increase the safety of agricultural trade to expand economic opportunities in the global marketplace.	9
Management Initiatives	11
Initiative 1: Encourage and support development, knowledge retention, collegiality, innovation, and safety.....	11
Initiative 2: Improve data-based decision-making.	11
Initiative 3: Use the latest science, tools, and technologies to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of PPQ’s work.....	11
Initiative 4: Mitigate risk effectively in the least restrictive, timely, and cost-effective manner.....	12
Initiative 5: Value and leverage a diverse workforce.....	12
Appendix A: PPQ and the APHIS Strategic Plan	13

Message from the Deputy Administrator

This year will be like no other. That's because the United Nations has declared 2020 the International Year of Plant Health. And, they are calling on people everywhere to join together and protect the very foundation of life on earth—plants.

As the United States National Plant Protection Organization, we at Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) are committed to doing all we can to protect plant health. Every day, we safeguard U.S. agriculture against pests that threaten our nation's food crops, farms, and forests. And, we make sure the products the United States trades do not spread damaging plant pests, helping to protect agriculture and natural resources here and around the world.

I think it is appropriate that 2020 is the International Year of Plant Health. As you know, '20/20' is a term that describes perfect vision. I can't think of a better time for PPQ and our many partners, cooperators, and stakeholders to come together and create a common vision about how we will collaborate in the coming years to better safeguard agriculture and facilitate safe agricultural trade.

This summer, we will host, in collaboration with the North American Plant Protection Organization, a groundbreaking 3-day event on safeguarding and safe trade, called *Safeguarding 2020*. The event will bring together leaders from U.S. government agencies at the Federal, State, and county levels; industry associations; private companies; academia; domestic and international non-governmental organizations; foreign governments; and regional and international plant protection organizations. Together, we will tackle the biggest plant health issues facing the United States, the North American region, and the world at large. We will work across sectors and across the agricultural supply chain as we consider new and innovative ways to ensure sustainable and profitable agriculture, healthy forests and ecosystems, and a safe and prosperous global trade system.

The outcomes of *Safeguarding 2020* will drive public and private actions, strategies, and partnerships for the next decade, including our own. That's why we're issuing this 1-year bridge plan. In 2021, we will publish a new 5-year plan that will reflect the vision and priorities that come out of *Safeguarding 2020*.

While our strategic priorities from the last 5 years will carry into 2020, there is one area where we will push ourselves to do more this year, and that is employee well-being. I truly believe that magic happens when our employees feel motivated, empowered, and supported by their organization. That's why I am making well-being PPQ's top priority in 2020. By focusing more on our employees' well-being, we will continue to increase PPQ's impact and better deliver on our promise of safeguarding agriculture and facilitating safe trade. When we're performing at our best, everyone who relies on agriculture thrives.

I look forward to working with all of you—employees, partners, cooperators, and stakeholders—in this landmark year. And I invite everyone to join us as we work to make the most of what this International Year of Plant Health has to offer.

Sincerely,

/s/

Osama El-Lissy
Deputy Administrator

PPQ's Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

We safeguard U.S. agriculture and natural resources against the entry, establishment, and spread of economically and environmentally significant pests, and we facilitate the safe trade of agricultural products.

Vision

Healthy plants and safe trade for a strong and prosperous America.

Values

Collegial Workplace: Our employees are our most valuable resource, and we are committed to our collective development, safety, and health. We create a sense of belonging, and we sustain a diverse workforce by fostering an environment that encourages inquiry, innovation, empowerment, and the sharing of information and knowledge.

Excellence: We are committed to an enduring legacy of excellence, innovation, continual improvement, and fair and impartial program delivery. We embrace new challenges, and we seek practical solutions.

Accountability and Integrity: We are trustworthy, committed to service, and good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. We are responsible for our actions as part of a federal agency.

Partnership and Engagement: We are stronger through partnership than we are alone, and we welcome the perspective and insights of all who take an interest in or are affected by our work.

Public Policy for Public Good: We base decisions about risk on the best available science, information, knowledge, and analysis. We fully consider public interests and concerns and the needs of business and commerce in our decision-making. We are environmental stewards whose actions strive to protect and sustain the environment.

Driving Forces

In a world in which the only thing that is constant is change, PPQ continually assesses the factors influencing its work. Six driving forces present challenges and opportunities for PPQ.

Increasing volume, complexity, and speed of international trade and travel

International trade and travel continue to increase. Businesses and industries operate in a global economy and are linked around the world through complex relationships. Transportation and distribution systems rapidly and efficiently move goods, making effective inspections and full compliance with PPQ's regulations increasingly difficult. As the volume, complexity, and speed of international trade and travel continue to increase, so does the risk that foreign animal and plant pests and diseases can enter and become established in the United States.

To focus PPQ's work on the highest risks and to keep pace with the demands of international trade and travel, PPQ will continue integrating and streamlining its safeguarding system. This includes actions to more fully coordinate and improve our offshore, port of entry, surveillance, detection, and response activities. PPQ will also focus on high-risk pathways and consider innovative, risk-based, and non-regulatory approaches to facilitate the safe movement of agricultural goods.

Demands for more timely and flexible solutions

As a regulatory agency, we use regulations to accomplish our mission. Developing and amending regulations, however, may result in solutions that are neither timely nor effective. Moreover, the way agriculture and commerce operate today means that some of our traditional tools may be more detrimental than beneficial.

Timely and flexible solutions are not new concepts. As a signatory to the International Plant Protection Convention and the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement, PPQ commits to employ phytosanitary requirements that provide the appropriate level of protection and that represent the least restrictive measures available to address the risk. In this way, we ensure that trade is not unnecessarily restricted.

PPQ will work closely with its state partners, U.S. agricultural and allied industries, and foreign trading partners to develop solutions based on risk assessments and sound science that do not always rely on regulations. Doing so will result in more timely and flexible actions, deeper and more substantial collaboration with PPQ's partners, and lower overall costs. In addition, PPQ will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs and will either change its approach to maximize efficiency and effectiveness or, if warranted, eliminate the program to free up resources for higher-risk pests. This approach will also enable PPQ to achieve its mission and will minimized or eliminate or undue burdens on its stakeholders.

Different perceptions and various levels of risk

PPQ characterizes risk as a function of probability and potential outcome. When a risk is clearly high or clearly low, determining how to address it is simple. When a risk falls between the extremes of low or high, it is more challenging to determine a reasonable course of action. A number of factors might influence PPQ's judgment about the actions to take in response to a risk, and that judgment will be perceived differently by different stakeholders, including employees.

Using the best available science and technologies, PPQ will work closely with its partners to characterize and address risk. PPQ will also enhance its data management and analysis to strengthen decision-making and focus PPQ's actions to ensure PPQ targets what is truly risky in an ever-changing global environment.

Increasing demands to open and expand markets here and abroad

American agriculture is surging in popularity worldwide. U.S. agricultural exports support more than 1 million jobs in communities across the country. Exports were valued at \$140 billion in 2018, a 1 percent increase over 2017, representing slowed growth and leading to the smallest trade surplus since 2006. This decrease was driven in part by strong, domestic, economic growth and in part by an uncertain trade environment. For some commodities, such as tree nuts and cotton, where more than 70 percent of U.S. production was exported, maintaining export markets means survival. The same is true for rice and wheat, where more than 50 percent of production is exported. The demands to open, expand, and sustain access to foreign markets continues to increase. On the flip side, other nations increasingly want access to our domestic markets to bolster and grow their own economies. While such trade is healthy for our economy, it demands more from our safeguarding system.

So, PPQ will work closely with federal, state, and industry partners and other countries to expand economic opportunities in the global marketplace by increasing the safety of agricultural exports and imports. PPQ will accomplish this economic expansion and increased safety through the development and use of harmonized, science-based phytosanitary measures in trade and joint efforts to reduce pest threats in high-risk pathways.

Rapid changes in technology

Rapid changes in science and technology provide opportunities for us to continually improve our safeguarding system, refine our tactics, and develop new or modify existing tools. Those rapid changes also give us an opportunity to improve how we serve our customers. From commerce to communications, digital data and information exchange and virtual interaction are replacing paper forms and face-to-face meetings. Plant sciences are also changing rapidly, increasing our knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with pests that affect agriculture and natural resources.

PPQ is committed to seeking and using the best available science, tools, and technologies to safeguard agriculture and natural resources and meet the needs of its customers. PPQ is also committed to conducting its work in a way that reflects how agriculture and commerce operate - whether today or in the future. To that end, PPQ will use technology to move at the speed of commerce and to keep pace with the demand for safe agricultural trade. And PPQ will lead the way in the development and delivery of science-based knowledge and methods to identify and analyze risks and mitigate pest threats.

PPQ needs to work with others to safeguard American agriculture

PPQ's success depends not only on the expertise and dedication of its employees, but also on the expertise and dedication of many partners and stakeholders as well. Our two most important partners are U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the National Plant Board (NPB). PPQ shares with CBP the mission of safeguarding agriculture and natural resources. CBP is primarily focused on inspection of conveyances, cargo, and passenger baggage at ports of entry; data collection; documenting violations and issuing spot settlements; and targeting based on

analysis. The NPB is a non-profit association of the state plant regulatory agencies. Together, PPQ, the NPB, and individual states work on programs to manage pests already in the United States and help provide certifications that enable exports of U.S. agricultural products. The perspectives of and the information provided by these key partners help PPQ refine its regulatory framework and policies.

In addition, PPQ partners with several other federal agencies to achieve shared objectives. PPQ also works with other countries to develop and implement mutually acceptable phytosanitary standards and pest mitigations to reduce the pest risks associated with the international and regional trade of agricultural commodities. And PPQ works with agricultural and allied industries to increase compliance with plant safeguarding laws and regulations and to encourage the use of best management practices to help reduce pest risks domestically and internationally. Finally, PPQ uses third parties who can provide auditing and certification services as part of systems approaches to address pest risk.

Moving forward, PPQ will foster its collaborative partnerships with internal and external entities to ensure we are safeguarding American agriculture. To strengthen the relationship with CBP, PPQ will engage CBP at all levels and will work with CBP to better understand its needs at the ports. PPQ will work with the NPB to address mutual strategic priorities that will enhance the efforts of both organizations. PPQ will work with its partners such as the NPB and industry to determine where collective efforts should be focused and flexible, and timely solutions should be implemented so resources are used wisely and efficiently and damage to agriculture and natural resources are minimized. Furthermore, PPQ will continue to explore how it might better strengthen its management and eradication programs by integrating the unique capacities of federal, state, industry, tribal, and non-governmental partners.

PPQ and the APHIS Strategic Plan

The APHIS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023 contains three goals, and the table below shows the goals that apply to PPQ. The APHIS plan also identifies various tactics PPQ will take to fulfill the Administrator’s commitment to safeguard the health and profitability of American agriculture. See Appendix A in this document for the PPQ tactics listed in the APHIS plan.

Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Strategic Plan Goals	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Strategic Plan Goals			
		Goal 1: Deliver efficient, effective, and responsive programs	Goal 2: Safeguard American agriculture	Goal 3: Facilitate safe U.S. agricultural exports
	Goal 1: Strengthen PPQ’s pest exclusion system		✓	
	Goal 2: Optimize PPQ’s domestic pest management and eradication programs		✓	
	Goal 3: Increase the safety of agricultural trade to expand economic opportunities in the global marketplace	✓		✓
	MI 1: Encourage and support development, knowledge retention, collegiality, innovation, and safety	✓		
	MI 2: Improve data-based decision-making	✓		
	MI 3: Use the best science, tools, and technologies to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of PPQ’s work		✓	
	MI 4: Mitigate risk effectively in the least restrictive, timely, and cost-effective manner	✓		
MI 5: Value and leverage a diverse workforce	✓			

PPQ's Goals and Objectives

To accomplish its mission, PPQ focuses its work in three areas: safeguarding against the entry and establishment of pests; eradicating and managing those pests that become established; and facilitating the safe export and import of agricultural products. This table presents PPQ's work another way and in more detail:

PPQ's Work		
Pest Exclusion	Pest Management and Eradication	International Plant Health Management
Offshore Programs	Management Programs	International Standards
Permitting	Eradication Programs	Resolving Phytosanitary Export-Import Issues
Border & Port Inspection		Export Certification
Pest Identification & Mitigation		
Smuggling Interdiction and Trade compliance		
New Pest Detection and Response		
Cross-Cutting Functions and Services		
Administration, Analytics, Budget, Communication, Compliance and Enforcement, Economic Analysis, Information Management, Manuals, Methods Development, Outreach and Public Education, Partnerships, Policy, Risk Analysis, Regulations, Safety and Health, Technology, Training, Treatments		

In response to the driving forces noted above and to fulfill APHIS' commitments to safeguard the health and profitability of American agriculture, PPQ will take steps to optimize its work in the three areas shown in this table. Specifically, PPQ's goals will:

1. strengthen PPQ's pest exclusion system,
2. optimize PPQ's domestic pest management and eradication programs, and
3. increase the safety of agricultural trade to expand economic opportunities in the global marketplace.

In addition, this plan contains management initiatives that:

- encourage and support development, knowledge retention, collegiality, innovation, and safety;
- improve data-based decision-making;
- use the best science, tools, and technologies to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of PPQ's work;
- mitigate risk effectively in the least restrictive, timely, and cost-effective manner; and
- value and leverage a diverse workforce.

PPQ will update operational plans annually to clearly lay out the implementation of the PPQ strategic plan goals, objectives, and management initiatives. While this strategic plan provides the high-level direction for PPQ, operational plans explain how a strategic plan will be put into action, who will be responsible, and how it will be monitored.

Goal 1: Strengthen PPQ's pest exclusion system.

PPQ safeguards billions of dollars of U.S. agricultural production. This sector of the American economy supports 1 in 12 jobs and provides U.S. consumers with more than 80 percent of the food they consume. In addition, PPQ protects nearly 600 million acres of forestland, rangelands, and other working lands against potentially devastating pests and diseases. The economic vitality of America depends on a financially strong agricultural sector and a healthy natural environment.

At the core of PPQ's safeguarding system is its pest exclusion system—also known as Agriculture Quarantine Inspection or AQI. The program's name is a bit misleading because PPQ's pest exclusion activities go far beyond the quarantine inspections conducted at our nation's borders and ports. The AQI Program is actually a continuum of exclusion strategies and activities that work together to mitigate the plant health risks that come with global trade, international travel, and the smuggling of prohibited agricultural products. The continuum includes exclusion strategies conducted offshore, at the ports of entry, and in domestic markets. The activities that support the continuum include, but are not limited to, risk assessment and analysis, policy development, permitting, inspections, pest identification and mitigation, new pest detection, and emergency response.

PPQ does everything it can to prevent or reduce the possibility of economically and environmentally significant plant and animal pests from entering the United States and becoming established. We will take steps over the next few years to strengthen and more fully coordinate our pest exclusion programs and activities. We will make better use of the information we collect at each point in the pest exclusion system to target and mitigate threats to U.S. agriculture and natural resources. We will also take steps to strengthen relationships with U.S. Customs and Border Protection—which shares our pest exclusion mission—and to find opportunities to work more closely with U.S. agricultural industries and others whose capacities could help strengthen our pest exclusion system.

Objective 1.1: Create a more integrated and effective pest exclusion system.

For example:

- Use analytics and risk modeling to inform the programs and activities that span the pest exclusion continuum—from offshore programs and border-port inspections to survey, detection, and emergency response.
- Continue to streamline import regulations to create a more performance-based and responsive pest exclusion system.
- Explore opportunities to integrate industry capacities and systems and to use third-party accreditation and certification for inspections, treatments, and testing.
- Continue to develop, test, and refine offshore and port-of-entry safeguards and mitigations, including alternative treatment technologies and consideration of the impacts of changes in the weather.
- Increase two-way exchange of information with other national plant protection organizations to help us identify and mitigate pests at their origin.
- Engage CBP to make improvements that will increase the effectiveness of port-of-entry inspections and facilitate the movement of agricultural products.

Objective 1.2: Focus pest exclusion programs and activities on risk-based approaches.

For example:

- Identify targets for new or expanded offshore work to address more risks at their origin; tailor oversight programs to be commensurate with risk, including reduced oversight for low risk imports.
- Focus CBP inspection activities and improve targeting of high-risk shipments and entities based on import history and trends.
- Exempt commodities from regulation or develop policies and procedures to facilitate their import when the risk of pest movement is low.
- Use education and outreach to increase compliance with import regulations and reduce pest risks in lower risk pathways.
- Continue to identify and address high-risk pathways and other problems confronting the pest exclusion system.
- Work with partners to determine the most effective response to new pest detections and to emerging pest threats.
- Modify and deploy early detection pathway and commodity surveys based on pest risk.

Goal 2: Optimize PPQ's domestic pest management and eradication programs.

When economically or environmentally significant pests become established, PPQ works closely with federal, state, tribal, and industry partners to reduce damage to agriculture and natural resources. To ensure that the capacities and resources of PPQ and its partners are invested when and where they will yield the greatest results, PPQ will take steps to more fully coordinate with and engage its partners to determine where we can and should focus our collective efforts. We will also continue to explore how we might integrate and wisely use the unique capacities of all of our partners—other federal agencies, states, industries, tribes, and non-governmental organizations—to strengthen our domestic pest management and eradication programs.

Objective 2.1: Focus the collective pest management and eradication efforts of PPQ and its partners to maximize their effect.

For example:

- Work with partners to evaluate the effectiveness of existing domestic pest programs to determine whether they should continue or how they might be adjusted.
- Work with partners to prioritize the development of new domestic pest programs.
- Determine when a regulatory response to a pest incursion would be ineffective and work with states and industry to determine the action they might take.

Objective 2.2: Integrate and use the unique capacities of all partners to strengthen and extend PPQ's domestic programs.

For example:

- Continue to work with states, industries, tribes, other federal agencies, and academia to identify, develop, and use practical, scientific, and economic pest management solutions (e.g., systems approach, management areas, etc.).
- Work with industry and states to design and implement industry-run treatment and certification programs that meet federal and state phytosanitary requirements.
- Develop and enhance detection, mass-rearing, biocontrol, and sterile insect methods and technologies in collaboration with industry, states, and other federal agencies.

- Develop and expand the use of regulatory frameworks that guide states, industries, and individual growers to effectively apply, with PPQ oversight, methods to eliminate or control pest populations.

Goal 3: Increase the safety of agricultural trade to expand economic opportunities in the global marketplace.

According to USDA’s Economic Research Service, U.S. agricultural exports are expected to reach \$137 billion in fiscal year 2020, and agricultural imports are forecast to total \$129 billion. The value of agricultural exports has consistently exceeded the value of imports, making exports a major contributor to the financial health of the United States and the global economy. U.S. agricultural trade not only supports nearly 1 million U.S. jobs, but also helps feed the world. But high global demand for international agricultural products also presents significant threats to U.S. agriculture and natural resources.

As the national plant protection organization of the United States, PPQ engages and collaborates with entities around the world. To reduce the pest risks that are associated with agricultural trade, PPQ works with global and regional standard-setting organizations such as the International Plant Protection Convention, the North American Plant Protection Organization, and foreign national plant protection organizations along with U.S. federal agencies, stakeholders, and industry. By increasing the overall safety of international agricultural trade, PPQ safeguards U.S. agriculture and natural resources.

In addition to increasing the overall safety of international trade, PPQ works with industry and other national plant protection organizations to open new and retain existing markets for U.S. agricultural products. PPQ also works with states and industry to ensure American commodity exports meet the requirements of importing countries. By working in these three areas—standard-setting, market access, and export certification—PPQ helps exporters contribute to the U.S. and international agricultural economy.

Objective 3.1: Promote the development and use of internationally and regionally harmonized, science-based phytosanitary measures.

For example:

- Engage industry and stakeholders in the development and implementation of phytosanitary standards.
- Seek opportunities to build consensus with members of standard-setting bodies on international and regional standards and priorities.
- Provide technical and scientific expertise to drive the development, adoption, and administration of effective and feasible international and regional standards.

Objective 3.2: Resolve international plant health issues to reduce export-import barriers.

For example:

- Work with other countries to identify and support mutually acceptable science-based phytosanitary measures.
- Provide technical and scientific information to resolve export-related disputes.
- Engage other countries to address potential phytosanitary issues that could create barriers for U.S. exports.

Objective 3.3: Assist exporters in managing phytosanitary issues to increase the safety and the number of U.S. plant and plant product exports.

For example:

- Develop treatments and mitigations for exports.
- Support U.S. growers to acquire clean, foreign germplasm.
- Identify and recommend agricultural and export practices to U.S. growers and exporters that can help mitigate pests of quarantine concern for foreign markets that import U.S. plants and plant commodities.
- Use domestic surveys more effectively to demonstrate that U.S. commodities and agricultural production areas are free of certain pests.
- Expand electronic processing of export documentation, adding digital signature capabilities, full electronic delivery and acceptance of documentation.

Management Initiatives

Initiative 1: Encourage and support development, knowledge retention, collegiality, innovation, and safety.

PPQ employees are critical to achieving our goals and fulfilling our mission. With many PPQ employees at or nearing retirement and an influx of new hires, PPQ must take steps now to prepare its changing workforce for the future. Investing in the workforce means nurturing a culture that fosters development, knowledge retention, collegiality, innovation, and a safe working environment.

- Align skills with positions, recruit, and provide training and development opportunities to help employees meet the needs of PPQ employees and their jobs.
- Take steps to retain knowledge as employees retire.
- Foster an environment in which leaders and employees inquire, listen, learn, build respect and trust, connect with each other, work together, and build mutual accountability throughout the organization.
- Empower employees to innovate and improve program and organizational processes.
- Ensure employees have a safe working environment.
- Foster a work environment that promotes employee well-being.

Initiative 2: Improve data-based decision-making.

PPQ will create a higher performing organization and improve customer service by making better use of data and analysis in its decisions, modernizing and consolidating IT systems and services, and strengthening facility and property management. This will require a commitment to sharing data and information among PPQ, our partners, and stakeholders.

- Improve data quality, collection, and management by applying standards and protocols.
- Increase access to data by adopting the most flexible systems to support the need.
- Improve the quality and increase the use of analytic products.
- Build a highly coordinated data quality and information management function that will help PPQ and its partners to more accurately assess and address pest threats based on the evidence.
- Deliver better services to USDA customers using the most appropriate web-based and next generation technologies available.
- Enhance PPQ resource management for long-term sustainability.
- Strengthen records management in PPQ to improve program delivery and knowledge management.

Initiative 3: Use the latest science, tools, and technologies to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of PPQ's work.

PPQ will conduct its work in the most efficient and effective manner to provide stakeholders and the public the best possible service at the lowest cost.

- Use the best science, tools, and technologies for pest detection, identification, and mitigation.

- Develop new and expand the use of existing systems approaches, phytosanitary measures, and phytosanitary management systems to safeguard agriculture and natural resources.
- Continue to develop and refine methods to analyze, quantify, prioritize, and communicate risk.

Initiative 4: Mitigate risk effectively in the least restrictive, timely, and cost-effective manner.

PPQ will refine its regulatory framework and operational procedures to optimize the effectiveness of its risk mitigations while reducing burdens on regulated communities.

- Simplify regulations to make them more transparent, enforceable, more commensurate with risk, and more feasible for regulated entities to follow.
- Explore ways to consistently apply regulations and policies proportionate to the risk.
- Consider alternatives to rulemaking when other strategies may be better suited to achieving PPQ's goals.
- Improve business processes to ensure the delivery of the services and products to customers and/or stakeholders is efficient, timely, and cost-effective.

Initiative 5: Value and leverage a diverse workforce.

PPQ will hold all managers, supervisors, and employees accountable for ensuring that the agency's customers and employees are treated in accordance with USDA's and APHIS' civil rights policy and applicable legal requirements.

- Provide a workplace that is free of discrimination.
- Enhance the diversity of the workforce through focused outreach, recruitment and retention efforts.
- Continue to promote the implementation of the human capital plan.

Appendix A: PPQ and the APHIS Strategic Plan

The APHIS Strategic Plan FY 2019 - 2023 lays out three strategic goals that represent the overall priorities for APHIS over the next five years. Each goal includes objectives that comprise the agency’s major programmatic efforts and services. The objectives that align with the PPQ mission identify tactics PPQ will use to fulfill the Administrator’s commitment to protect the health and profitability of American agriculture. PPQ is committed to fulfilling these actions. In addition, PPQ will improve its safeguarding system, optimize its pest management and eradication programs, and increase the safety of international agricultural trade. Doing these things will help PPQ achieve its mission, which will in turn contribute to the accomplishment of APHIS’ mission.

APHIS GOAL: Deliver efficient, effective, and responsive programs	
APHIS Objectives	PPQ Tactics
1.1: Improve the customer experience by modernizing information technology infrastructure, facilities, and streamlining the delivery of our services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand electronic processing of export documentation, adding digital signature capabilities, full electronic delivery and acceptance of documentation. Complete development and implementation of eFile, a system that will automate APHIS’ permitting processes along with other processes like certification, registration, and licensing. Improve electronic sharing of information and data.
1.2: Maintain a high performing workforce through employee engagement and empowerment and provide a safe workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in developing effective and talented managers, along with building fundamental management practices that improve employee engagement, performance, recruitment, retention and work life quality. Increase the value of engagement by encouraging management to focus on talent production resulting from coaching and development that is based on people’s strengths, placing them in positions to take advantage of these strengths, and giving feedback that build on these strengths. Continue knowledge management initiatives to assist with succession planning.
1.3: Remove obstacles in APHIS programs by reducing regulatory burden and streamlining processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and identify regulations not supported by current science and practices. Continue streamlining and deregulatory processes to reduce the burdens on stakeholders to comply with regulations not supported by current science or practices. Continue to review and improve business line processes to ensure the delivery of the services and products to customers and/or stakeholders is efficient, timely, and cost-effective.
1.4: Maximize the return on taxpayer investment through stewardship of resources and focused program evaluations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the agency’s use of performance data and program evaluation results to drive decisions.
1.5: Leverage workforce differences to better serve the Agency’s customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure employees understand the needs of all agency partners, stakeholders, and customers. Hold APHIS’ leaders, managers, supervisors and employees accountable for treating the agency’s customers and employees in accordance with USDA’s and APHIS’ civil rights policies and applicable laws. Provide a workplace that is free of discrimination.

APHIS GOAL: Safeguard American agriculture	
APHIS Objectives	PPQ Tactics
2.1: Prevent damaging plant and animal pests and diseases from entering and spreading in the United States to promote plant and animal health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a sterile Medfly barrier in Guatemala preventing the northward movement into Chiapas, Mexico and the Yucatan, including Belize. • Produce and provide sterile Medfly pupae to support preventive release operations in high-risk areas in Florida and California. • Collaborate and work with states, foreign governments, and international partners to reduce risk pathways; support disease and pest-free zones and animal and plant pest and disease pathway analyses and risk assessments; identify sources of introductions and determine mitigations to prevent new introductions; obtain timely information on pests, diseases, trends and changing risk patterns; monitor and prevent the spread and introduction of pests and diseases; and develop regional cooperation and awareness. • Provide technical expertise and leadership to global and regional animal and plant health organizations in their efforts to support local, regional, and global pest and disease control and eradication efforts. • Partner with other Federal agencies to fund, design, develop, and deliver animal and plant pest and disease training to foreign counterparts and to leverage infrastructure overseas and provide training and technical assistance on animal, plant and zoonotic diseases. • Apply molecular diagnostic capabilities to plant pest and animal disease identification as a means to achieve efficiencies, improve consistency, and increase the precision of diagnostic services and associated quarantine or response decision-making. • Manage inspections at Plant Inspection Stations (PIS) through Risk Based Sampling (RBS) to reduce inspections of low-risk shipments and proportionally increase inspections of higher-risk consignments. • Develop the Regulatory Framework for Seed Health (ReFreSH) to prevent the introduction of seed borne pests using a systems approach for imported seed. • Streamline the importation of plant cuttings produced in approved offshore facilities to expedite the entry of low-risk cuttings while refocusing APHIS inspectors on higher risk imports. • Address the threat of invasive pests and diseases associated with the international movement of sea containers to mitigate pest risks associated with the sea container pathway. • Strengthen the North American perimeter against pest threats from outside the region to prevent the introduction of agricultural, forest, and other invasive pests. • Prevent the sale of prohibited plant material via the internet or e-commerce.

<p>2.2: Manage plant and animal pests and diseases once established in the United States to promote plant and animal health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen partnerships to develop strategies to control and potentially eradicate harmful plant and animal pests and diseases through effective and innovative education, surveillance, and border control efforts. • Collaborate with industry, Tribes, and States to develop approaches that take advantage of best management and husbandry practices to minimize the damage and spread of plant and animal diseases. • Deploy mobile data collection tools and transfer capabilities for data retrieval to optimize internal IT development resources to build stronger domestic pest management and trade safety missions. • Strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of programs for pest detection, mitigation, and wildlife damage assessments through the use of Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) and environmental DNA technologies. • Train canine teams for early detection of pests and disease to more precisely target plant management and eradication activities in domestic programs.
<p>2.3: Ensure effective emergency preparedness and response systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop emergency preparedness responses for pest and disease outbreaks that include ensuring resources are available and personnel are trained. • Build upon APHIS' animal and plant health networks to deal with pest and disease emergencies. • Coordinate with stakeholders and other Federal agencies on all-hazards agriculture and natural resources response support (Emergency Support Function #11 of the National Response Framework). Use APHIS animal and plant health networks, capabilities, and structures to support State, local, territorial, and Tribal governments as they assist with animal and agricultural emergency management. • Identify priorities and develop strategies around emergency preparedness and response exercises and other training.
<p>2.6: Provide and coordinate timely diagnostic laboratory support and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and coordinate with other partners on diagnostic techniques, assays, and new technologies including scientific computing to support greater use of genomics and bioinformatics.

APHIS GOAL: Facilitate safe U.S. agricultural exports	
APHIS Objectives	PPQ Tactics
3.1: Create export opportunities for American producers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify strategic opportunities for removing or reducing trade barriers that impact market retention, access, and expansion of U.S. agricultural products. • Work closely with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, industry partners, and key international counterparts to better understand the changing profiles of business and commerce and their relationship to SPS issues. • Promote the development and worldwide implementation of science-based trade standards to ensure a safe, fair, predictable trade system and a level playing field for U.S. products abroad. This includes providing leadership and scientific expertise to OIE, IPPC, and regional plant protection organizations to promote science-based standards for animal and plant health and welfare. • Provide technical assistance and support to emerging market countries on implementing international standards. • Provide technical assistance to foreign regulatory counterparts to improve their capacity to implement scientifically sound regulations that affect U.S. exports.
3.2: Ensure resolution of sanitary and phytosanitary issues and trade barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and prioritize resolution of plant and animal trade issues with all trading partners. • Advance the adoption and implementation of electronic certification (ePhyto) to make certificate exchange fast, efficient, and fraud resistant. • Conduct technical meetings with trading partners to establish fair, practical, science-based, plant health requirements for commodity imports and exports.