The Safeguarding Continuum

To protect American farms and forests from harmful plant pests and foreign animal diseases, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) has a system of safeguards in place. Those safeguards begin abroad in other countries, continue through U.S. ports of entry, and extend across the Nation. This system is called the **Safeguarding Continuum.** All along the continuum, PPQ experts assess risks associated with pests that hitchhike on and in the agricultural products we import. They also take action in the right time and place to protect U.S. agriculture and natural resources while keeping international trade and travel moving. Here's how it works:



PHYTOSANITARY ISSUES MANAGEMENT We work with countries around the world to establish fair, science-based plant health requirements for imported and exported commodities.

RISK AND PATHWAY ANALYSIS AND TARGETING We analyze data from

around the world to figure out which pests could harm U.S. agriculture, how they might get here, and what we need to do to keep them out of the United States.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS SETTING We work with over 180 countries and international organizations to harmonize rules of trade for agricultural products to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive pests and diseases and facilitate safe trade.

OFFSHORE PROGRAMS We work with foreign countries to address pest threats where they originate. This includes inspecting and certifying fruits, vegetables, bulbs, and plants in many countries and working with the U.S. military to inspect and certify equipment and household goods, all before they ship to the United States.



IMPORT REQUIREMENTS AND PERMITTING

We develop science-based regulations and issue import permits that detail requirements and conditions for safely importing a wide variety of agricultural products into the United States.

INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER AND CARGO

CLEARANCE We train U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel who clear the cargo, trains, trucks, ships, mail, and express packages that cross our borders to make sure they don't bring unwanted pests into our country. We also establish and enforce handling and disposal requirements for food and agricultural products removed from passenger aircraft and ships arriving from foreign locations.

DOMESTIC PASSENGER AND CARGO

CLEARANCE We inspect all U.S. mainlandbound aircraft, cargo, and traveler bags from Hawaii and Puerto Rico to keep unwanted pests from hitchhiking along.

PEST IDENTIFICATION AND RISK MITIGATION We identify plant pests and diseases found in imported shipments at U.S. ports of entry and determine what actions to take to reduce or eliminate the threat posed by intercepted pests or diseases.

LIVE PLANT INSPECTION We inspect live plants, plant cuttings, and seeds arriving in the United States. We also enforce the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and work with others to combat illegal timber trade.

PORT ENVIRONS SURVEYS We monitor areas around U.S. ports of entry for signs of pests that may have escaped into the environment.



METHODS DEVELOPMENT We use the latest science and technology to develop methods for detecting, identifying, and keeping harmful plant pests and diseases out of this country.

TRADE COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

We analyze import data, conduct riskbased inspections, and work with other government agencies to stop the entry and distribution of unlawful agricultural goods that could bring harmful plant pests or animal disease into this country.

EXPORT CERTIFICATION We work with State and county partners to inspect and certify plants and plant products being shipped to markets overseas.

PLANT QUARANTINE PROGRAMS

We offer a number of plant quarantine programs to growers, breeders, and scientists who wish to import prohibited or high-risk plant materials for improving U.S. agriculture. Through these programs, we test, clean, and monitor imported plants to ensure they are pest- and disease-free before they can enter into production.

PEST SURVEILLANCE AND RESPONSE

We work with State departments of agriculture and others to continuously scan the U.S. landscape and quickly find and respond to new pests and diseases before they can cause large-scale damage to our Nation's farms and forests.

PEST MANAGEMENT When foreign pests become established in the United States, we work closely with Federal, State, Tribal, and industry partners to control and, when possible, eliminate them from our country.

CROSS-CUTTING SERVICES Underpinning all of our work are the services of our professional staff who are responsible for administration, budget, communication, information technology, and training.



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