



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JAN 11 2011

The Honorable Frank D. Lucas
Chair
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6001

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As requested by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (Farm Bill) of 2008, I am writing to provide a report on the plans developed by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) for funding provided under Section 10201 of the Act for Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention. In developing these plans, APHIS sought input from the National Plant Board and State Departments of Agriculture and consulted its Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey cooperators, the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, industry organizations, and other stakeholders. All agree that early pest detection is important to avoid significant economic and environmental damage. Once a pest becomes established or spreads significantly, the cost to eradicate, suppress, or manage it can be in the millions—not to mention the cost in lost crops and damage to the ecosystem. APHIS and its partners are using the Farm Bill funds to build on existing early detection efforts and develop new strategies to identify pests and diseases that pose threats to U.S. agriculture and ways to mitigate them.

Section 10201 is allowing APHIS to bridge the gaps among 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, APHIS is developing a more comprehensive picture of plant health in the United States based on solid, accurate data. This information facilitates and enhances trade opportunities for U.S. plant producers and nursery growers. APHIS and its cooperators have identified six key areas to concentrate on: 1) enhanced analysis and survey; 2) targeted inspection at vulnerable points in the United States; 3) enhanced pest identification tools and technology; 4) programs to safeguard nursery production; 5) enhanced education and outreach; and 6) enhanced mitigation capabilities.

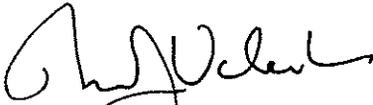
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Enclosed is a document describing APHIS' use of the Section 10201 funds. It describes specific projects APHIS conducted in fiscal year 2010. I appreciate the Committee's interest in this matter. Similar letters are being sent to Congressman Peterson and Senators Stabenow and Chambliss.

Sincerely,

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Thomas J. Wilsack
Secretary

Enclosure



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The Honorable Collin C. Peterson
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture
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The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
United States Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6000

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

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Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
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328A Russell Senate Office Building
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**Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service**

**Section 10201: Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention
Report to Congress, December 2010**

Introduction

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) provided \$45 million in funding in fiscal year (FY) 2010 to build and preserve critical plant health safeguarding initiatives across America. These funds allowed the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to support State and national efforts to improve pest detection and mitigation activities and also to ensure that specialty crops remain a viable segment of our national agriculture by protecting them from high-consequence plant pests and diseases.

Overall Progress

In FY 2010, APHIS provided funding for approximately 277 projects under the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program. The majority of these projects aimed to:

- Enhance analysis and early pest detection through State surveys;
- Fund development of New Pest Response Guidelines (NPRGs) for preparation of action plans to address new pests; and
- Provide assistance to States for rapid response to specific pests of national significance.

Approximately 75 percent of the projects directly provided funds to 48 State Departments of Agriculture and two territories. The other 25 percent provided funds to universities, Federal agencies, tribal organizations, nonprofit entities, or were used by APHIS to:

- Train cooperators on diagnostic procedures or use of canine teams;
- Procure traps and lures for nationwide distribution to cooperators in pest programs;
- Hire postdoctoral scientists to write NPRGs; and
- Support development of an improved data management system for use by States and territories, other cooperators, and APHIS.

We estimate that up to 400 jobs were created or supported as a result of this funding. Over 100 external parties received over 85 percent of the funds. These projects were overseen by 90 APHIS Project Leaders located throughout the United States and in the two territories where work is being conducted. Table 1 shows both the number of projects and distribution of funding by goal; Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of funding by goal; and Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of projects by goal.

Table 1. Section 10201 FY 2010 Funding by Goal Area

Goal Area	# Projects	Funding
1. Enhance Analysis & Survey	106	\$15,155,275
2. Domestic Inspection	10	\$4,744,341
3. Enhance Pest Identification & Technology	44	\$4,919,083
4. Safeguard Nursery Production	21	\$1,828,303
5. Outreach and Education	30	\$3,200,013
6. Enhance Mitigation	66	\$15,152,985
TOTAL	277	\$45,000,000

Figure 1.

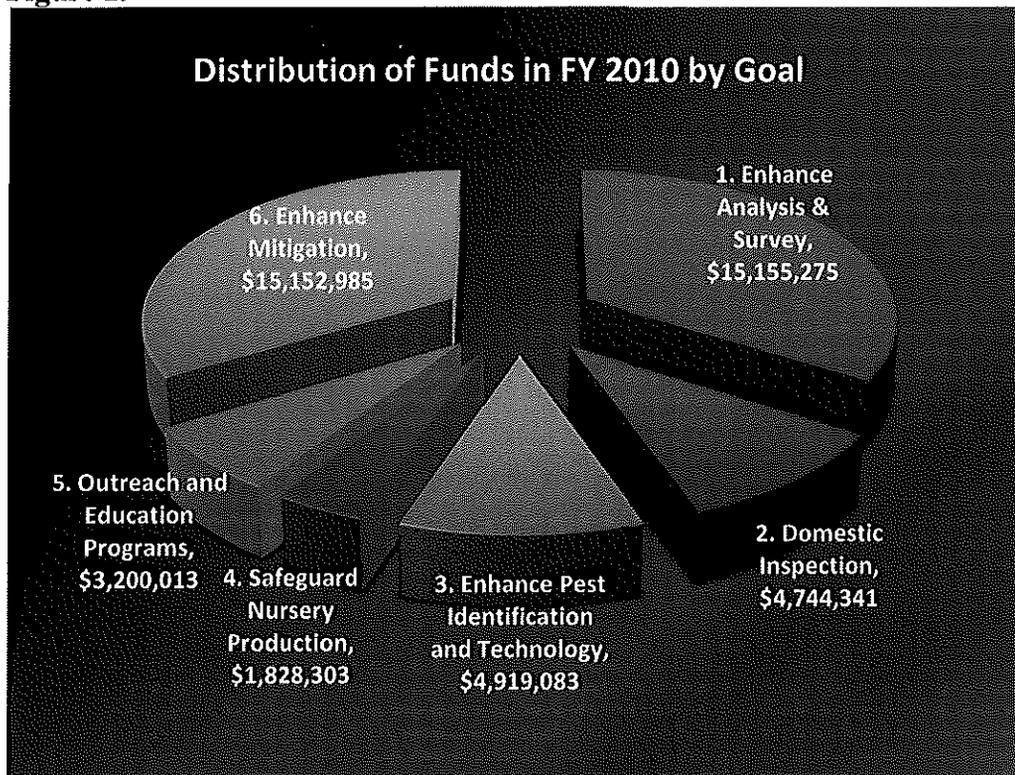
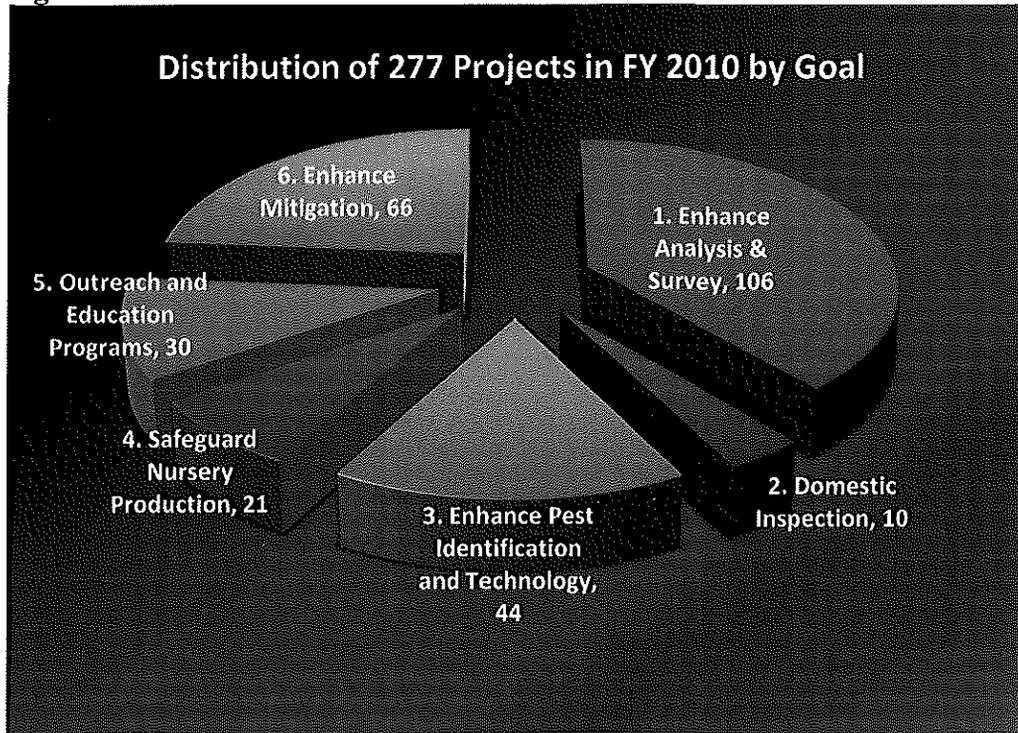


Figure 2.



Description of Fiscal Year 2010 Projects by Goal Area

GOAL 1

Enhance Plant Pest/Disease Analysis & Survey

Under this goal, APHIS funded many surveys for pests of national significance such as plum pox virus, *Phytophthora ramorum*, grape pests (including the European grapevine moth), and honey bee pests (including sampling to help determine the cause of colony collapse disorder). These surveys enhance protection through rapid and thorough detection of plant pests that threaten the operations of growers and nursery owners. These surveys help growers, nursery owners, and Federal and State regulatory agencies avoid costly control measures associated with large and significant plant pest infestations. In addition, under this goal the program commenced 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. Toward these ends, the program is developing a pilot project with the nursery and seed industries. The program allocated more than \$15.2 million to 106 projects in this goal area.

GOAL 2

Target Domestic Inspection at Vulnerable Points in the Safeguarding Continuum

Projects in this goal area target domestic inspection activities at vulnerable points in the movement of products and commodities with the potential to carry pests of regulatory significance. Several projects in this area involve training canine teams for domestic survey detection activities in California. Such teams may be 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. A few other projects provided funds to monitor critical entry points or interdiction stations in Texas and Florida and trained dog teams to detect snails. The snail dog teams are capable of clearing cargo much faster than human teams alone, and with greater accuracy. This improved detection and increased efficiency resulted in savings of APHIS and U.S. Customs and Border Protection resources. The program allocated more than \$4.7 million for 10 projects in this goal area.

GOAL 3

**Enhance & Strengthen Pest Identification
& Technology**

The objective of this goal area is to develop, provide training for, and deploy survey procedures and tools that improve our ability to rapidly detect and accurately identify pests of regulatory significance. Distributing the most effective surveillance tools available to the States in a timely manner increases the likelihood of the early detection of exotic pests—before they become established and create significant economic or environmental damage. Several examples of funded projects are the development and implementation of a National Survey Supply Program to oversee timely procurement and delivery of quality survey supplies to APHIS field personnel and State cooperators; 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; investigation into rapid pest identification tools to detect pests of greatest threat to agriculture; and offshore initiatives to optimize early detection programs. The program allocated more than \$4.9 million for 44 projects in this goal area.

GOAL 4

Safeguard Nursery Production

Activities included in this goal area include developing science-based, pest-management, and risk-mitigation practices that exclude, contain, and control regulated plant pests from the nursery production chain as well as developing and harmonizing audit-based nursery certification programs. These activities help large and small nursery stock producers and distributors mitigate pest risks, reduce operational costs, and enhance the value of nursery stock they produce. Primary areas of focus included ongoing work on control and management practices for *Phytophthora ramorum* at the National Ornamentals Research Site at Dominican University of California. A separate set of interrelated projects forms a broad-based initiative that supports the development, validation, and implementation of audit-based systems for safeguarding nursery production and individual and multi-State initiatives to develop and pilot harmonized nursery stock certification programs for economically important and high-risk specialty crops, including fruit trees, blueberries, and strawberries. The program allocated more than \$1.8 million for 21 projects in this goal area.

GOAL 5**Conduct Outreach & Education**

Under this goal area, the program is working to engage the public in early detection efforts through, among other things, a formal volunteer program for exotic pest surveillance. A few examples are the Northeast Forest Pest Outreach and Survey Program, which was expanded from nine States in 2009 to include an additional three States in 2010; projects to engage botanical gardens in pest monitoring and outreach; a Pacific Northwest Firewood Outreach project in three States; a Small Farms Outreach project; the development of eLearning modules for pest screening and increasing diagnostic capacity; a laurel wilt symposium; outreach to tribal nations across the United States; projects to enlist volunteers for Asian longhorned beetle/emerald ash borer survey in 16 States; and a Web site for citrus health. The program allocated more than \$3.1 million for 30 projects in this goal area.

GOAL 6**Enhance Mitigation Capabilities**

As a part of this goal area, APHIS provides technical assistance prior to, during, and immediately following a plant-health emergency. These funds provide for 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; applied research on citrus pest mitigation; grasshopper mitigation; procurement of survey supplies for emergency programs; immediate research on wood boring beetle attractants to improve trap effectiveness; coconut rhinoceros beetle mitigation in Guam; and plum pox virus eradication in New York State. The program allocated more than \$15 million for 66 projects in this goal area.

For additional details about FY 2010 projects, please see APHIS' Web site, www.aphis.usda.gov/section10201.

Threat Identification and Mitigation Program

Risk Assessments

Risk assessment of the “potential threat to the agricultural industry of the United States from foreign sources” is a backbone of the program. Initially, APHIS characterized risk by State to help start a dialogue about States that may be most susceptible to introduction of invasive exotic pests and that may realize the most harm. The preliminary findings of this assessment were presented to the National Plant Board (NPB). The topic was controversial because, depending on perspective and data sources and the pest being characterized, a State’s “risk ranking” may change. Subsequently, APHIS has funded several projects to enlist State and industry perspectives in revising the current State risk determinations. Following is a summary of a few of the cooperative agreements in the area of risk assessment.

Expand Risk Assessment Collaboration with States.

\$150,000, North Carolina State University

The risk-assessment and data-collaboration project panel is conducting an external review of the comparative risk assessment for the 50 States and 2 territories. A report and revised risk assessment will be generated based on the recommendations from the panel. To further refine the resolution of the State risk assessment, the review panel will identify data elements critical for a county-level analysis of risk potential to United States agriculture for a broad range of invasive plant pests. In addition, data for specific risk pathways, for threats such as exotic bark beetle, has been collected from multiple sources. This data will be incorporated into a flexible framework that will allow States to quickly access information at zip-code level and collaborate through data sharing to further define and refine pathway(s) of interest.

Risk and Economic Assessment Tools for Collaboration.

\$305,000, North Carolina State University; and \$75,000, Purdue University

The full title of this project is, “Risk Models and Data Sharing Protocols to Promote Collaboration Between the Nursery and Seed Industries, APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ), State Cooperators, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Universities in the Early Detection, Surveillance, and Control of Exotic Pests.” APHIS and cooperators are developing three tools to provide sophisticated risk-analysis products to APHIS, States, and industry cooperators. The models address three fundamental questions: Where can a pest establish, what yield losses will it cause, and what are the potential economic impacts? The collaborators have been developing data-sharing capabilities with industry cooperators to make use of valuable, underutilized resources and information. A pilot study is being conducted for pests of corn and soybeans, in collaboration with the American Seed Trade Association.

**Early Detection
Specialty Crop
Pathways.**
\$118,000, Michigan
State University

Michigan State University is conducting a project developing risk-analysis models for optimal spatio-temporal targeting of pathways for specialty crops and their associated pests. Through the creation and combination of multiple datasets in a geographic information system, researchers are developing novel methodologies to identify areas at risk and the time(s) when risk may be greatest for pest introductions to various specialty crops such as cut flowers and bulbs. The products generated from this project will be integrated into existing APHIS predictive pests systems and delivered to Federal and State cooperators, allowing for the development of more accurate risk assessments.

**Data Archival and
Reporting for the
Global Pest and
Disease Database, to
Support Risk Analysis
for PPQ, State
Cooperators and
Industry.**
\$220,000, North
Carolina State
University

The objectives of this project are to adopt and modify the Global Pest and Disease Database (GPDD) to better support risk analysis. The GPDD is APHIS' primary source of biological data for the risk analysis data of exotic plant pests. The improvements to the GPDD include: 1) archive of pest risk assessment data; 2) develop enhanced risk analysis tools; and 3) provide industry stakeholder access. So far, the project has resulted in the addition of 42 new pest risk assessments (PRAs); 25 new pests; 3,549 new pest host associations; and 3,099 new pest distribution records to the database. A pest list report has been created to allow users to create a PRA pest list for a selected country and commodity. Published analytical techniques that have been successfully used to prioritize plant pests and identify at-risk host plants are now being tested with the extensive GPDD pest data sets.

Collaboration with the National Plant Board

Planning for the FY 2010 Spending Plan began in May 2009. To inform the development of the spending plan and help identify the types of projects that should be funded in FY 2010, APHIS actively sought input and suggestions from interested stakeholders through a variety of venues, including a 2-day stakeholder meeting in June 2009. APHIS received over 230 written suggestions. As in FY 2009, the FY 2010 Spending Plan builds upon the six goal areas described in the Implementation Plan.

To ensure that funds are used to achieve the goals of the 2008 Farm Bill and to promote a consistent, fair, and transparent process in the development of the FY 2010 Spending Plan, APHIS developed criteria to assist in the evaluation of suggestions received from external and internal sources. The criteria included:

- Alignment with 10201 “risk” criteria (number of international ports of entry in a State; volume of international passenger and cargo entry into the State; geographic location of the State and if the location or types of agricultural commodities produced in the State are conducive to agricultural pest and disease establishment due to climate, crop diversity, or natural resources of the State; and whether the Secretary has determined that an agricultural plant pest or disease in the State is a Federal concern);
- Impact—potential benefit to specialty and other crops;
- Sustainability; availability of existing infrastructure to support proposed activities beyond 1 year of 10201 funding;
- Broad engagement of a number/variety of cooperators;
- Potential benefit to small farms;
- Feasibility, scope of work, and methodology; and
- Performance measures, deliverables, and communication plan.

In September 2009, APHIS met with members of the NPB and the Specialty Crops Farm Bill Alliance to share ideas obtained up to that time. Participants at that meeting identified additional criteria to consider when determining the relative merit of project suggestions. Some of the additional criteria included:

- Focus on pest(s)/disease(s) of significant regulatory concern;
- Potential benefit to more than one State;
- Representative of a new, innovative, or entrepreneurial approach;
- Includes clearly defined and achievable objectives; and
- Potential to yield significant and tangible results in 1 year.

Teams were formed for each goal area, and APHIS team leaders were charged with engaging Agency headquarters and regional staff, representatives from other Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies (National Institutes for Food and Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), USDA Forest Service) and NPB-appointed representatives when developing a plan for their goal area. The teams reviewed the list of suggestions and applied the criteria to identify those that may merit funding. Those recommendations were then presented to the NPB and the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance for input.

Action Plans for High Consequence Plant Pests and Diseases

APHIS evaluates data about pests and the factors that contribute to their introduction and establishment in the United States by various means. PPQ develops NPRGs as a framework for providing methods and tools to contain, control or eradicate a plant pest. “Generic” NPRGs are organized by grouping taxonomically related plant pests and then describing detection and control methods that may apply to any pest within the group. Pest-specific NPRGs are developed when the plant pest does not fit the generic guidelines because of its unique characteristics, as well as when a new plant pest of quarantine significance is first detected in the United States. The NPRGs serve to jumpstart preparation of site- or situation-specific action plans for high-consequence plant pests and diseases. The action plans may need to address environmentally sensitive areas, unique pest mitigation issues, site accessibility issues, potential impact to Threatened and Endangered species or wetlands, and many other issues. Because action plans may be too specific to help us prepare for pest incursions, PPQ strives to use NPRGs as a means to engage experts and stakeholders in documenting reasonable measures to mitigate pests, and in some cases to identify areas in need of further research. The key is to attempt to develop these guidelines prior to a plant pest incursion.

Several ongoing efforts to address high consequence plant pests and diseases have been enhanced with funding under Section 10201 and are summarized below.

New Pest Response Guidelines, \$150,000, University of California; and \$150,000, University of Florida

The overall goal is to review the management of invasive species problems in Florida and California. Teams in each State will evaluate how the issue of invasive species is being approached, including how new pests are predicted and how new finds are responded to by Federal, State, and local agencies as well as by stakeholders. The teams will develop an inventory of practices in other States and regions; evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches and determine if they are duplicating efforts; and expand the University of Florida’s Invasive Arthropod Working Group Web site to include pathogens and weeds. The Web site will be used as a tool to help manage this project and distribute *information to cooperators*.

New Pest Response Guidelines (NPRG)– National Plant Disease Recovery System (NPDRS) Collaboration, \$201,970, North Carolina State University

APHIS provided funding to USDA’s ARS to develop NPRGs for plant diseases that ARS is studying under the National Plant Disease Recovery System (NPDRS). ARS is the lead agency addressing NPDRS, and under an agreement with The American Phytopathological Society, commissioned scientists to prepare the NPDRS documents. This project will allow APHIS and ARS to develop a coordinated approach to plant diseases that could pose threats to U.S. food security. The result will be a comprehensive set of documents for preemptive research, preparedness to mitigate specific plant diseases, and longer-term mitigation if necessary.

**Postdoctoral Scientists
Employed to Write
NPRGs**

APHIS-PPQ hired four postdoctoral researchers from North Carolina State University to develop a minimum of 12 NPRGs. They will work closely with APHIS experts at the APHIS-PPQ Center for Plant Health Science and Technology, who routinely produce these science-based informational documents. The NPRGs will be selected from the following list of target organisms:

Plant pathogenic phytoplasmas

- “*Candidatus Phytoplasma australiense*”—Australia grapevine yellows phytoplasma
- “*Candidatus Phytoplasma mali*”—apple proliferation phytoplasma
- “*Candidatus Phytoplasma prunorum*”—European stone fruit yellows phytoplasma
- “*Candidatus Phytoplasma phoenicium*”—Almond witches' broom phytoplasma

Insects

- *Adoxophyes orana*—Summer Fruit Tortrix Moth
- *Archips xylosteamus*—Variegated Golden Tortrix
- *Cydia funebrana*—Plum Fruit Moth
- *Bactrocera invadens* (fruit fly)
- *Dendrolimus pini*—Pine-tree lappet
- *Dendrolimus superans* (Siberian silk moth) and *Dendrolimus sibiricus*
- *Dendrolimus punctatus*—Pinemoth caterpillar
- *Dendrolimus* spp. (to include six species that occur in China)

The total funding provided in FY 2010 for all projects under the **Threat Identification and Mitigation Program** was \$1,369,970. In many respects, these are pilot programs to enhance collaboration and cooperation among the NPB, industry, and other cooperators. These initiatives will help APHIS and its cooperators determine how to stem the flow of new pests into the United States and how to mitigate the pests when first detected.