



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

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

**Strategic Plan: 2015–2019**

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## A Message from the Deputy Administrator



Dear Colleagues and Stakeholders:

For more than 40 years, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) has safeguarded the health and marketability of U.S. agriculture and natural resources from destructive pests. But our role goes beyond the eradication of pests that enter the United States and the management of those that become established. Today, we also play a critical role in making sure that billions of dollars of agricultural commodities are traded safely, without artificially moving pests through commerce.

Agriculture is our country's largest industry and employment sector, adding more than \$330 billion to the economy. USDA's Economic Research Service projects that the value of U.S. agricultural trade alone will likely exceed \$250 billion this year. Our forests and natural resources provide economic value, contribute to human and environmental health, and provide untold enjoyment for millions of people. Looking ahead to the next five years, our mandate is clear: We must balance the safeguarding of our nation's plant resources with the growth of our nation's economy. We must also balance the demands of international trade with the needs of one of our nation's most vital industries and its natural resources.

As the national plant protection organization (NPPO) of the United States, we will continue to optimize our structure and our practices to create a more cohesive, effective, and efficient safeguarding system. We will also continue to work closely with our domestic and foreign partners to increase the safety of global trade by:

- influencing international standard-setting,
- strengthening and enforcing plant health requirements for agricultural commodities that move in domestic commerce and foreign trade, and
- enhancing offshore activities to prevent and mitigate pest risks before commodities are exported from other nations to the United States.

To help U.S. growers and anyone else who relies on U.S. agricultural or natural resources for their livelihood, we will optimize our pest management and eradication programs to make the best use of federal, state, industry, tribal, and non-governmental resources to fight any pests that enter the United States. We will also enhance our services to increase the safety and marketability of U.S. plant and plant product exports.

In pursuing these goals, PPQ's most valuable resource is its employees. Their success is fundamental to our collective success. Therefore, PPQ will emphasize employee development and training and will continue to foster a collegial and innovative culture that values people, accountability, and performance.

Whatever goals we set and whatever strategies we follow to achieve them, our actions make a tangible difference. We lower the risk of plant health threats to U.S. growers. We safeguard our nation's natural resources. We increase opportunities for U.S. products in global markets. Our dedication is vital to our success in all of these things and in our overall promise to deliver healthy, profitable agriculture that thrives in a global economy, bolstered by record high levels of exports and protected against threats of economically and environmentally significant pests and diseases.

Only PPQ can do all of this for all of America, which is why I invite you to read the following strategic plan.

Sincerely,



Osama El-Lissy  
Deputy Administrator  
Plant Protection and Quarantine

*January 2015*

## **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**

During the past 10 years, a combination of events has shifted the way we need to think about and approach our 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 take steps to integrate and streamline its safeguarding system. This will include actions to more fully coordinate and improve our offshore, port of entry, surveillance, detection, and response activities. PPQ will also 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. By signing onto the International Plant Protection Convention and the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement, PPQ has agreed to employ phytosanitary requirements that provide the appropriate level of protection and that represent the least restrictive measures available. In this way, we ensure that trade is not unnecessarily restricted.

Therefore, PPQ will work closely with its state partners, U.S. agricultural and allied industries, and foreign trading partners to develop solutions that are based on risk assessments and sound science, but 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. This approach will also enable PPQ to achieve its mission with the lightest possible burden 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 risk 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 come into play that require PPQ to judge the actions it should 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 pressure 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. Because of this, we are being asked to do more to open, expand, and sustain access to foreign markets. 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 pressures and 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 together 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 a number of 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 contains seven 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 below 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: Strengthen PPQ’s pest exclusion system	Goal 2: Optimize PPQ’s domestic pest management and eradication programs	Goal 3: Reduce pest risks to facilitate the global trade of agricultural products
	Goal 1: Prevent the entry and spread of agricultural pests and diseases	✓	✓	✓
	Goal 2: Ensure the humane treatment and care of vulnerable animals			
	Goal 3: Protect forests, urban landscapes, rangelands and other natural resources, as well as private working lands from harmful pests and diseases	✓	✓	✓
	Goal 4: Ensure the safety, purity, and effectiveness of veterinary biologics and protect plant health by optimizing our oversight of genetically engineered (GE) organisms			
	Goal 5: Ensure the safe trade of agricultural products, creating export opportunities for U.S. producers	✓	✓	✓
	Goal 6: Protect the health of U.S. agricultural resources, including addressing zoonotic disease issues and incidences, by implementing surveillance, preparedness and response, and control programs	✓	✓	✓
	Goal 7: Create an APHIS for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century that is high-performing, efficient, adaptable, and embraces civil rights.	Covered by PPQ management initiatives		

## 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		
<b>Pest Exclusion</b>	<b>Pest Management and Eradication</b>	<b>International Plant Health Management</b>
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		
<b>Cross-Cutting Functions and Services</b>		
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 during the next five years 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, the 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 manner; and
- value and leverage the differences offered by 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 more fully coordinate 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 climate change impacts.
- 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 approaches, 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 a record \$149.5 billion in fiscal year 2014, and agricultural imports are forecast to exceed \$110 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:

- 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.
- Help U.S. growers 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.

## 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.
- PPQ will 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.

### **Initiative 2: Improve data-based decision-making.**

PPQ will create a higher performing organization by making better use of data and analysis in its decisions. 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 consolidating and integrating IT systems.
- Improve the quality and increase the use of analytic products.
- Build a highly coordinated data analysis and information management function that will help PPQ and its partners more accurately assess and address pest threats based on the evidence.

### **Initiative 3: Use the best 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 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 manner.**

PPQ will refine its regulatory framework to maximize 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.

**Initiative 5: Value and leverage the differences offered by a diverse workforce.**

PPQ will hold managers, supervisors, and other 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.

- Adhere to the specific goals, performance objectives, and indicators that have been established by the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights to ensure progress. These are presented in Appendix B.
- Provide a workplace that is free of discrimination.
- Enhance the diversity of the workforce through focused recruitment and retention efforts.
- Enhance special emphasis programs to expand learning about other people and cultures.

## Appendix A: PPQ and the APHIS Strategic Plan

The APHIS Strategic Plan lays out four broad goals for PPQ for the next five years. That plan also identifies 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 achieves its mission, which will in turn contribute to the accomplishment of APHIS’ mission.

APHIS Goal	PPQ Tactics
Prevent the entry and spread of agricultural pests and diseases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with Canada to implement an effective multi-national system that reduces the threat of tree pests arriving from Asia and other parts of the world (e.g. Asian gypsy moth).</li> <li>• Work with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to provide inspections of imported agricultural products at U.S. ports-of-entry to prevent the introduction of harmful agricultural pests and diseases.</li> <li>• Collaborate with CBP to review and update U.S. inspection policies to address emerging risks.</li> <li>• Work with partners to conduct pest and disease pathway analyses and risk assessments to identify possible sources of introductions and determine protections and mitigations to prevent new introductions.</li> <li>• Strengthen, expand, and improve coordination of the Agency’s offshore pest and disease surveillance activities and programs.</li> <li>• Collaborate with Mexico to prevent the spread of citrus greening disease.</li> <li>• Cooperate with Mexico to eradicate boll weevil and the pink bollworm.</li> <li>• Partner with other reference laboratories around the world and work with other countries to further expertise in diagnostics including partnering with Canada and Mexico to harmonize diagnostic methods and contribute to North America becoming a model geographical region for rapid disease detection.</li> <li>• Benchmark how other developed nations are gathering independent scientific information on pest and disease risks and sharing this information with consumers, industry, and academia to inform policies and decisions.</li> </ul>
Protect forests, urban landscapes, rangelands, and other natural resources, as well as private working lands from harmful pests and diseases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the emerald ash borer regulatory framework to focus on the leading edge of infestations while minimizing impacts on regulated businesses in quarantined areas.</li> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of releases of biological control agents in States and combine both regulatory and education outreach activities to address the risks of moving logs, firewood, and nursery stock.</li> <li>• Examine detection technologies (such as traps and visual surveys) and partner with States to determine and apply the most effective strategies to survey and eradicate the Asian longhorned beetle, which threatens up to 30 percent of trees nationwide.</li> <li>• Partner with Federal and State agencies to enact measures such as a public outreach campaign to mitigate the movement of forest pests through firewood.</li> <li>• Continue to explore options that minimize regulatory burdens.</li> <li>• Conduct surveys and treatments to manage grasshopper and Mormon cricket damage, emphasizing early season treatments (using lower levels of insecticides) to reduce immature pest populations rather than stronger, more</li> </ul>

	expensive pesticides required to address mature pests.
APHIS Goal	PPQ Tactics
<p>Ensure the safe trade of agricultural products, creating export opportunities for U.S. producers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify strategic opportunities for removing or reducing trade barriers that impact market retention, access, and expansion of U.S. agricultural products.</li> <li>• Take a holistic approach to resolving plant trade issues with all trading partners across the board, understanding that this is a key and expanding market.</li> <li>• Work closely with industry partners and key international counterpart officials to better understand the changing profiles of business and commerce, and their relationship to SPS issues.</li> <li>• Play a leadership role in revising the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) Publication 15. ISPM 15 directly addresses the need to treat wood materials of a thickness greater than 6mm that are used to ship products between countries.</li> <li>• Further expand electronic processing of export documentation adding digital signature capabilities and full electronic delivery and acceptance of documentation.</li> <li>• Fully develop and implement eFile, a system that will automate all of APHIS' permitting processes along with other processes like certification, registration, and licensing.</li> </ul>
<p>Protect the health of U.S. agricultural resources, including addressing zoonotic disease issues and incidences, by implementing surveillance, preparedness and response, and control programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use early detection surveys for a greater number of high-risk exotic plant pests.</li> <li>• Expand plant pest and disease surveys to target high-risk hosts and commodities and provide assessments of pest distribution and pest-free areas.</li> <li>• Prevent citrus greening disease from causing damage in California by establishing a multi-agency coordination framework to better coordinate the work of Federal, State, and citrus industry partners.</li> <li>• Strengthen partnerships with Tribal Nations to develop a robust surveillance and early detection system for detecting and reporting invasive species.</li> <li>• Build upon APHIS' extensive animal and plant health networks to deal with pest and disease emergencies.</li> <li>• Work effectively with all stakeholders to coordinate all-hazards agriculture and natural resources response support (Emergency Support Function #11 of the <i>National Response Framework</i>) including coordination with Federal agencies for support to USDA for statutory responses. Use APHIS animal and plant health networks and structures to support State, local, territorial, and Tribal governments as they assist with animal and agricultural emergency management. Integrate response support across the preparedness spectrum.</li> <li>• Eradicate boll weevil from the United States through trapping and treatment efforts.</li> <li>• Eradicate the European grapevine moth, a serious threat to the grape and wine industry, from California using detection strategies and treatment protocols recommended by a technical working group comprised of federal and State experts and academic scientists, with assistance from California and industry participants in funding and conducting control treatments.</li> <li>• Develop science-based programs in collaboration with industry and academia to jointly identify practices that will mitigate pest damage. For example, APHIS has been working with the National Plant Board and the nursery industry to improve nursery production practices.</li> <li>• Work with USDA and university researchers to study the impact of climate change on the emergence or spread of pests and diseases in the United States,</li> </ul>

	<p>and redesign regulatory approaches to better prevent or mitigate the impact of pests and diseases on U.S. plant and animal resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with the DHS and other partners to address gaps in diagnostic capabilities for early detection of high consequence diseases.</li> </ul>
<p>Create an APHIS for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that is high-performing, efficient, adaptable, and embraces civil rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively seek, through formal and informal means, employee feedback to improve: organizational performance; employee recruitment, retention, and development; and work life quality.</li> <li>• Enhance the leadership skills of current APHIS leaders and develop a cadre of future leaders.</li> <li>• Improve APHIS leadership accountability by ensuring equal opportunity accountability assessments are submitted timely, consistently, and accurately.</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of APHIS employees with Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and Learning Contracts.</li> <li>• Monitor individual development to ensure employees are benefitting from continual learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Develop employees to enhance the organization's ability to meet its mission and to increase the ability of employees to achieve rewarding careers within the organization.</li> <li>• Encourage employees to embrace new challenges in an environment of open innovation.</li> <li>• Fully develop and implement eFile, a system that will automate all of APHIS' permitting processes along with other processes like certification, registration, and licensing.</li> <li>• Increase telework participation to meet USDA's telework goals.</li> <li>• Implement a strategic framework for APHIS information technology (IT) that focuses on providing all employees with the same quality of IT support; enhancing technology to better serve our customers; unifying IT service delivery and products and services; securing IT data and systems; and, building an effective cadre of highly skilled IT professionals.</li> <li>• Renew and enhance our commitment to safety and health. APHIS continues to improve the safety and security of employees performing dangerous tasks or working in areas domestically or abroad that are inherently dangerous. Activities include increasing awareness and training on safety and security issues, increasing outreach to APHIS employees, and improving working relationships.</li> <li>• Provide a workplace with zero tolerance for harassing, threatening, and violent behavior.</li> <li>• Focus on new strategies to improve and deliver our services in a way that is less costly, faster, and more effective for American agriculture, farmers and ranchers, taxpayers, and all those we serve.</li> <li>• Seek innovative solutions to administrative projects such as strategic sourcing, workers compensation, and marketplace approaches. This includes exploring options to acquire goods and services using shared resources such as USDA-wide contracts and identifying APHIS services that could be placed on a USDA-wide marketplace menu of services. The Agency will also work with other USDA agencies to develop program efficiencies in the Office of Workers' Compensation Program and implement long-term strategies such as a department-wide safety management system.</li> <li>• Hold managers, supervisors, and other 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.</li> <li>• Ensure all customers equal access to programs, activities, and services delivered or funded by USDA and APHIS.</li> </ul>

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- Provide a workplace that is free of discrimination.
  - Enhance the diversity of the workforce through focused recruitment and retention efforts.
  - Use the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process, whenever possible. ADR can provide effective tools to aid in the resolution of discrimination complaints. The most common tools include mediation, conciliation, coaching, and facilitation.
  - Increase procurement with small businesses, small disadvantaged businesses, and minority-owned businesses.
  - Implement actions items addressed in the Agency’s Cultural Transformation Action Plan.
  - Enhance special emphasis programs to expand diversity learning.
  - Work with advisory groups and committees to ensure that we understand the needs of diverse customers, partners, and stakeholders.
  - Adhere to the specific goals, performance objectives, and indicators that have been established by the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights to ensure progress.
  - Expand the Agency’s use of performance data and program evaluation results to drive decisions. APHIS will use the information derived from program evaluations to identify areas for improvement and opportunities for applying limited resources to improving the quality of service provided by APHIS programs.
  - Reduce the footprint of leased and owned real property assets through consolidations, co-locations, and reductions in underutilized assets.
  - Increase cross-program coordination on the acquisition and use of APHIS fleet vehicles to maximize use.
  - Identify and implement additional procurement opportunities suitable for strategic sourcing within the Agency and the Department.
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## Appendix B: Civil Rights Commitment

The following table represents the USDA Goals, Performance Objectives and Goal Indicators as they pertain to Agency Leadership commitment to improving civil rights in APHIS.

Civil Rights Performance and Accomplishment Report			
Goal	Performance Objectives		Goal Indicators
<b>Commitment of Agency Leadership/ Strategic Integration</b>	Leadership	Hold managers, supervisors and other employees accountable for ensuring that USDA's customers and employees were treated in accordance with USDA'S civil rights policy and applicable legal requirements.	<p>APHIS commitments to USDA's civil rights goals and obligations are included in the Strategic Plan. The commitment includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employees are notified of the requirements of Departmental Regulation (DR) 4300-010, "Civil Rights Accountability Policy and Procedures," issued January 18, 2006.</li> <li>2. Annual performance appraisals for managers and supervisors include an evaluation of their contributions to USDA's commitment to civil rights and equal opportunity, and adherence to civil rights policy.</li> <li>3. A representative sampling of performance plans (signed copy) shows evidence of EEO elements for all levels</li> <li>4. Provide a list and identify finding of each employee case where disciplinary action or corrective action was taken relating to civil rights or retaliation and indicate the timeframe in which the action was taken.</li> <li>5. APHIS submits succinct narrative rationale with documented evidence to determine compliance with the above indicators using the appropriate scoring elements.</li> </ol>
<b>Secretary's Commitment</b>	Secretary's Commitment	Took affirmative steps to implement each of the areas illustrated by the Secretary.	<p>APHIS implements Secretary's Commitment:</p> <p>The Secretary's commitment of successful transformation includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An inclusive workplace environment where there is equity of opportunity and all employees are empowered to reach their full potential</li> <li>2. Modernization of technology and systems that will enable us to provide the highest level of service;</li> <li>3. A commitment by USDA employees to improving USDA's past and future record of civil rights, including expanding outreach efforts to socially-disadvantaged farmers and ranchers;</li> <li>4. Systems of accountability that encourage all employees to achieve high standards of performance and customer service; and</li> <li>5. A renewed commitment to creating diversity in the workforce and succession planning.</li> </ol>
<b>Implementation of Secretary's Commitment</b>	Agency's Commitment to Diversity	Took Affirmative steps to implement each of the six (6) component areas illustrated by Diversity Road Map and ensured that goals and timelines are accomplished accordingly.	<p>APHIS implements the Diversity Road Map to meet all requirements and timelines</p> <p>USDA's Diversity Road Map has specific goals, activities, and timelines, organized around the following (6) components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership Accountability and Commitment</li> <li>2. Outreach and Partnerships</li> <li>3. Recruitment and Hiring</li> <li>4. Retention and Promotion</li> <li>5. Diversity Training and Awareness</li> <li>6. Employee Development and Recognition</li> </ol>