

Farm Bill Section 10007 Program

2015 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

February 19, 2015

Questions and Answers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is charged with implementing Section 10007 of the 2014 Farm Bill to prevent the introduction or spread of plant pests and diseases that threaten U.S. agriculture and the environment. Under the Farm Bill, APHIS provides funding to strengthen the nation's infrastructure for pest detection and surveillance, identification, and threat mitigation, while working to safeguard the nursery production system.

The following information addresses basic questions regarding the Section 10007 suggestion submission and evaluation process. For more information, visit APHIS' Farm Bill Section 10007 website at: www.aphis.usda.gov/farmbill

- **How much funding is available in fiscal year (FY) 2015?** We anticipate that approximately \$62.5 million will be available in FY15.
- **What changes to the process have you made from previous years?** Very few. The FY15 Annual Implementation Plan describes Goals, Objectives and Strategies upon which to focus project suggestions for funding through the implementation of Section 10007. This should assist stakeholders to identify and develop suggestions that address a critical need or an unexplored opportunity in terms of strengthening prevention, detection, and/or mitigation efforts. Further, Specific Implementation Strategies were developed to add clarity and direction to ensure suggestions are focused on key implementation activities that support the objectives within each major Goal Area.

Enhancements have also been added to the online submission process (Metastorm application). It is expected that these enhancements will help focus potential suggestions in areas of urgent priority, while providing a more efficient process for soliciting and evaluating suggestions. In addition, PPQ Program Managers, State Plant Health Directors and Regulatory Officials will have real-time access to suggestions to better ensure they address Section 10007 priorities.

- **How do I submit a suggestion?** Suggestions must be submitted electronically using the FY15 Farm Bill Suggestion System. Suggestions submitted through other means will not be accepted. Instructions for submitting suggestions will be made available on APHIS' Farm Bill Section 10007 website and be presented during a series of help session webinars coinciding with the open period.
- **What should be included in a suggestion?** In addition to some basic information about the suggestion (such as suggestion title, budget estimate, and contact information of the individual submitting the suggestion), stakeholders should provide the following information when submitting a suggestion:

- How the suggestion aligns with Section 10007 goals, strategies, and categories as defined in the [FY15 Implementation Plan](#), which is posted on the Farm Bill-[Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Programs](#) website.
- The potential/expected impact of the suggestion.
- The proposed technical approach.
- The roles and responsibilities of any cooperators or institutions likely to participate in carrying out the suggestion. *Note:* Federal entities are also required to include the percentage of total budget that would be provided to each non-Federal cooperator or participating institution.
- Relevant prior experience and accomplishments to date for renewing projects previously funded through FB Section 10007.

When constructing a suggestion, stakeholders are strongly encouraged to consider the evaluation criteria (available on the APHIS Farm Bill Section 10007 website) that will be used during the evaluation process to make sure their suggestion addresses those factors as well. Stakeholders are also strongly encouraged to discuss proposals with appropriate PPQ Program Managers and all cooperators prior to submitting proposals.

- **Who is eligible to submit a suggestion?** Federal and State agencies, non-profit organizations, tribes, colleges and universities are all eligible to submit a suggestion.
- **May foreign entities submit a suggestion?** No, but they may work with a domestic entity who may submit a suggestion. The suggestion should describe why it may be necessary to accommodate situations where U.S. Federal or State collaborative interests might need to touch upon foreign collaborators as part of a more comprehensive packet to get work done. If the suggestion is recommended and subsequently approved for support, then the matter of the actual instrument of collaboration might be discussed.
- **Can stakeholders submit more than one suggestion?** There is no limit to the number of suggestions an individual or entity can submit.
- **What is the timeline for developing the FY15 Spending Plan?** Currently, the proposed timeline for developing the FY15 Spending Plan is:
 - mid-September (2014), the FY15 open period begins
 - late October (2014), the FY15 open period closes
 - November (2014), the FY15 evaluation process begins
 - Mid-December (2014), the FY15 Draft Spending Plan developed
 - March (2015), the FY15 Spending Plan released
- **Once the final Spending Plan is developed, when will APHIS make funds available?** APHIS anticipates publishing the final FY15 Spending Plan in January or early February, or sooner, if possible. Funds will be made available to cooperators shortly thereafter. Every effort will be made to provide funds to cooperators as quickly as possible, especially in those cases where ongoing work might suffer as a result of a lapsed agreement
- **How will the review process work and what criteria will be used to evaluate suggestions?** All suggestions are reviewed by Section 10007 Goal Teams. Teams include representatives from

APHIS, the National Plant Board, USDA's Agricultural Research Service, USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA's Forest Service, tribal representatives, the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, and the university system research community.

All Section 10007 Goal Teams will use the same parent criteria to evaluate the strategic alignment, impact, feasibility, and past performance/best practice/innovation of each suggestion. A detailed definition of each criterion is available on the APHIS Farm Bill Section 10007 website.

After all Section 10007 Goal Teams have completed their evaluations, the Teams will meet to discuss preliminary funding priorities in an effort to identify synergies across goal areas. The Goal Teams will work to ensure that the final Spending Plan addresses critical needs and unexplored opportunities to strengthen prevention, detection, and/or mitigation efforts.

- **How will funding decisions be made?** The Section 10007 Goal Teams have developed criteria that will be used to evaluate new suggestions and to identify ongoing work that merits continued funding. Representatives from the National Plant Board, Specialty Crops Farm Bill Alliance, tribal organizations, and other USDA agencies participated in a process to determine the relative weight of each criterion through a structured process. The weighted criteria will then be used to rate every suggestion. The ratings will inform the creation of a list of suggestions to be considered for funding, but are not the only determinant.

APHIS, National Plant Board, Specialty Crops Farm Bill Alliance, tribal organizations, and other USDA agency representatives will also consider the suggestion slate as a whole, contemplating and identifying potential synergies that might exist between suggestions that are similar in nature or that are submitted under different goals. APHIS will work with cooperators in a manner that achieves the most impact by considering all suggestions collectively before finalizing funding decisions. The intent of seeking suggestions from stakeholders is to facilitate the development of a comprehensive plan to address early pest detection and rapid response that takes into consideration a diversity of expert opinions on the types of efforts and initiatives that are likely to accomplish the goals of Section 10007. Because this is not a grant program, APHIS has significant flexibility to create a spending plan that addresses the goals of Section 10007.

- **Do suggestions that propose to continue ongoing work have preferred status?** No. Suggestions that continue funding ongoing work will be reviewed and evaluated using the same criteria that will be applied to new suggestions. The fact that a suggestion received funding in prior years does not guarantee renewed funding.
- **Will some States automatically be given more funding than others?** States that have frequent incursions of high consequence plant pests as a result of the number of international ports of entry in the State, the volume of international passenger and cargo entry into the State, the geographic location of the State, and a host range or climate that is conducive to pest establishment, are likely to receive higher levels of funding. That said, a State will not automatically be given a set amount of funding. All decisions regarding the distribution of funding, including decisions about continued funding of ongoing work, will be made in a transparent manner using clearly communicated criteria.

- **Can States request funding for programs that are facing reduced funding or defunding at the Federal level?** The program is not intended to specifically address fiscal challenges. While a cooperator could request funding that meets a need generated by a reduction or loss in funding to a particular program, that suggestion must still meet the requirements for Section 10007 funding.

The FY15 Spending Plan will be organized around six Section 10007 Goal Areas: enhancing plant pest/disease analysis and survey; targeting domestic inspection activities at vulnerable points in the safeguarding continuum; enhancing and strengthening pest identification and pest ID technology; safeguarding nursery production; enhancing mitigation capabilities; and conducting outreach and education about these issues.

- **Are there any limitations to what Farm Bill funding can be used for?** To ensure its consistent and proper use per Congressional intent, Farm Bill Section 10007 funding should not be used to:
 - purchase vehicles,
 - build new structures,
 - pay the salaries* of permanent APHIS-PPQ staff, or
 - develop IT applications, systems, etc.* that have not been previously approved by APHIS-PPQ.

* Requests for exceptions must be reviewed by the Farm Bill Management Team and approved by the PPQ Deputy Administrator. In addition, requests to use Farm Bill funding for IT projects must also be approved by the PPQ IT Governance Board.

- **Can States have overlapping agreements?** APHIS can sign overlapping agreements as has been done in the past. Note that the new agreement would be for work that is for the upcoming fiscal year, while the ongoing, prior year's agreement finishes work that was funded in the prior year. In addition, cooperators must submit reports and requests for payment to APHIS separately for each agreement. An important point for overlapping cooperative agreements concerns the work for each. Current fiscal year work cannot be the same work that is being performed for an unfinished prior fiscal year agreement. This means that a cooperator cannot receive current fiscal year funding to finish prior fiscal year work. The work must be different.
- **What is the difference between a Group Suggestion and Single Entity Suggestion?** A Group Suggestion would be appropriate only if each entity involved in the project will have a separate direct agreement with APHIS. Only one cooperator needs to submit a suggestion for the group. In a group suggestion all of the following should be listed: the name of each cooperator that will have a separate cooperative agreement with APHIS, their state, and the amount of funding (include yourself) that each cooperator will directly receive. Funding for all cooperators listed must add up to the Total Budget being requested.

A Single Entity Suggestion is one where, if funded, the project will have just one agreement with APHIS. Any subsequent distribution of funds within the project would fall outside of APHIS and be managed internally. For example, a sub-contractor would be considered 'internal' to the project. Although not required for a single entity submission, you may want to list the entities that you will subcontract with on the suggestion form and in your budget breakdown

under the budget category “Contractual”. This will aid in the overall evaluation of the submission as a way to document that the resources are available to carry out the project.

- **Since the FB program began in 2009, what has been accomplished?** Since the program began in 2009, APHIS has funded more than 1,000 projects in 50 states and two territories. These projects have strengthened our ability to protect American agriculture and natural resources by allowing us to enhance plant pest/disease analysis and survey activities, target domestic inspection activities at vulnerable points in the safeguarding continuum, augment and strengthen pest identification and technology, safeguard nursery production, increase public awareness and understanding of pest threats through education and outreach, and expand mitigation capabilities. Notable accomplishments include:
 - The training of several canine teams for domestic survey detection activities in California. These teams have been deployed at strategic locations to enhance the State’s efforts to mitigate pests that escape undetected through ports-of-entry such as at interstate borders and, in some situations, where deliberate introductions of illegal goods may have occurred.
 - The training and deployment of dog teams to monitor critical entry points or interdiction stations in Texas and Florida to detect snails. The snail dog teams are capable of detecting snails much faster than human teams alone and with greater accuracy, resulting not only in improved detection capabilities and increased efficiencies, but also cost savings.
 - The deployment of several small, quick, and effective mitigation efforts that reduce the impacts to growers, releasing them from quarantine more quickly and allowing them to get back into production. A few examples are gypsy moth control; mollusk mitigation; fruit fly mitigation in Florida, Texas and California; grasshopper mitigation; and plum pox virus eradication in New York State.
 - The distribution of effective surveillance tools to States in a timely manner to increase the likelihood of the early detection of exotic pests, including online resources for rapid identification of selected plant pests of regulatory concern; enhanced laboratory capacity and training of cooperators in high-risk States; strategic research on Caribbean pests that threaten the United States; and offshore initiatives to optimize early detection programs.
 - The commencement of several cooperative projects to analyze pathways through which specialty crops are vulnerable to exotic invasive pests and to develop risk- and economic-assessment tools to help determine survey and mitigation priorities.
- **Do proposals have to be aligned with a specialty crop?** Initiatives that focus on specialty crops will be weighted higher during the evaluation process under Goal 1 Survey; however, the program will consider unexplored opportunities or emerging pest threat outside the specialty crop arena in all goal areas.
- **Do proposals have to focus on a PPQ quarantine pest?** The goal teams will consider suggestions that address pests that could potentially threaten US agriculture. Not all pests that could potentially threaten US agriculture are currently listed as PPQ quarantine pests. If a suggestion clearly aligns with the stated objectives of a particular goal area, it will be considered.

- **How are goal teams developed?** The goal teams include members from APHIS and our various stakeholder groups. Representatives from each group are nominated, and in consultation with the Farm Bill Management Team, approved for a defined period of time. Please refer to Appendix 1 Farm Bill Team Charter for additional information on selection procedures and terms of service.