

10201 Farm Bill Stakeholder Meeting: June 8-9

Safeguarding Nursery Production

Executive Summary

We organized feedback from the Farm Bill Stakeholder meeting for safeguarding nursery production into the following general categories:

- Scope
- Communication
- Harmonization
- Incentive
- Complexity
- Economics
- US Nursery Certification Program (USNCP)
- National Ornamentals Research Site – Dominican University of California (NORS-DUC)
- National Clean Plant Network (NCPN)

For each category, we generated a synopsis of stakeholder feedback combined with our responses as subject matter experts to specific questions.

Stakeholders questioned the geographic scope of the Nursery Safeguarding Initiative. We explained that our initial focus is on domestic interstate movement but our goal is to establish common national standards to enable interstate movement and export. Stakeholders questioned Federal and State regulatory authorities and certification requirements in terms of being voluntary or mandatory. Many States have mandatory certification requirements codified in their regulations. Federal requirements under a national standard are intended to be voluntary but not replace existing State programs. Stakeholders questioned the scope of pests and commodities under a national certification program. We explained that our approach is holistic with the intention of covering the broadest possible spectrum of pests and commodities. We conveyed that our pest priorities are quarantine and non-quarantine regulated pests while acknowledging other significant economic pests.

Stakeholders placed strong emphasis on communication, transparency, and clarity of information. They expressed confusion over various certification programs. They repeatedly sought definition of terms. They recommended scoping sessions, more meetings, and outreach and extension. Stakeholders recognized the importance of harmonization but acknowledge the difficulty of achieving a national standard. We explained that harmonization is stakeholder driven.

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of incentives to obtain industry participation. They recommended several options including reduced insurance premiums, brand recognition, and improved market access. Stakeholders emphasized the complexity of the

nursery industry in terms of economies of scale. They expressed concern about technology transfer pertaining to operational changes needed to engage in complex certification programs. Stakeholders emphasized the need for an economic analysis of nursery certification programs to demonstrate the economic benefits to the industry.

Stakeholders expressed interest and support for the U.S. Nursery Certification Program. They also recommended an independent economic analysis and quantitative assessment of the pest management effectiveness and to determine the benefits and liabilities of the program. Stakeholders expressed mixed messages about NORS-DUC. Those in favor of the program argued that information generated by the research would be valuable to the industry. Those critical of the program argued that the scope is too limited and that it should be industry funded. Stakeholders expressed support of NCPN but suggested clean plant programs should be industry funded. They acknowledged a need to integrate clean plant programs with nursery certification systems.

Scope: Geographic (Domestic v Foreign)

Summary

Stakeholders questioned the geographic scope of the Nursery Safeguarding Initiative. We explained that our initial focus is on domestic interstate movement but our goal is to establish common national standards to enable interstate movement and export.

Session 1

- Is the future focus on domestic commerce or international trade (export)?
 - Reply >>> Primary focus is to address risk of moving pests through the USA
 - Domestic movement concerns (e.g. fruit trees, Nat'l Clean Plant Network)
 - Ideally 1 system for both domestic and international trade (this ideally would also include flexibility to connect with 'smaller' actions such as the NCPN).

Session 5

- Invasive species moving from the USA into the Caribbean
 - Much US nursery trade into the islands
 - US export inspections are OK but material is handled differently once it progresses on journey to/thru the islands; material becomes contaminated
- Desire is to build capacity between partners for better phytosanitary international Nursery Certification Program
 - Fine idea, but must be built on nursery practices (BMP's)
 - Question >>> is this for domestic movement of material or for international trade?
 - Definitions needed
 - trade throughout all phases of the plant movement system
- 10201(d) – approach this holistically
 - Develop both domestic and international movement processes
- Note domestic vs. international >>> we can't have 2 separate programs; these are ideally combined

NORS-DUC

Summary

Stakeholders expressed mixed messages about NORS-DUC. While some stakeholders were receptive to the use of 10201 funds for this purpose, others were against it. Those in favor of the program argued that information generated by the research would be valuable to the industry. Those critical of the program argued that the scope is too limited and that it should be industry funded.

Session 3

- NORSDUC is a good idea; much needed, about time
- Some stakeholders not thrilled at idea
 - Reasons
 - Funds should not be so concentrated
 - Funds should be used to address wider community pest issues
- CONCERN >>> Goal 4 too large given the limited resources made available
 - Note >>> NORSDUC intended to be self supporting in time
- P. ramorum BMP's
 - Some are standard; but only some are validated; more work needed on this
 - Cost/benefit analysis needed
 - How will this be done?
 - APHIS (we have facility, we have some BMP's)
 - The experimental nursery will give the answers
- Other pests?
 - Start w/P. ram then build other BMP's for other pests
- Other Phytophthora's?
 - Consider also doing research on others
 - Note >>> NORSDUC (because of location) can only work on pests in the quarantine area
- FY 2010 activities
 - BMP's for P. ram in California is good start
 - Does HACCP analysis to determine and address critical control points
- P. ram genetics research??? How is pathogen population genetics affected by nursery conditions?
 - Question >>> Is such work appropriate for 10201 funds!
- Recommendation:
 - HACCP analysis >>> what are the critical points in the audit process that have associated record-keeping that can be assessed?
 - Test/pilot programs needed to determine what works and what growers can commit to.
 - Note >>> record-keeping multiplicity is problematic to growers
- 2010 Timelines and Deadlines needed to get NORSDUC up and running
 - Develop a clear research plan
 - Provide a small amount of 'dedicated funding' or seed money to attract cooperators nto using the nursery and supporting research there.

Session 4

- NORSDUC – there's no connection between Dominican U and the UC system
 - Concern >>> no UC enthusiasm in working at the facility
 - Is this program well thought through?
 - Will the facility ultimately be well utilized
- Is NORSDUC redundant?
 - Could this work have better been done at an existing commercial facility
 - Note >>> Santa Clara Co. indicates at least 2 nurseries that might have cooperated
- Is NORSDUC a process by which government establishes BMP's for nurseries?
 - Shouldn't nurseries establish their own BMP's
 - Gov't should assist but not necessarily lead
- Before building nursery from scratch, better communication desired w/CA County Ag Commissioners
- USDA response but no responses from o the NORSDUC discussion
 - USDA spent 4 years seeking a cooperator in CA, a facility, but only Dominican U responded
 - University nursery is an appropriate response; commercial nurseries are not
 - Any nursery infected w/P. ram as a research site would need to be 'paved-over' once work completed due to infections latent in soils. Soil might have to be removed if site needed use again as a nursery
- Generally; meeting participant agree that this research nursery needs doing
- How do we proceed in 2010 re Experimental Nursery?
 - Note >>> it's an Ornamental Research Site; not a production nursery
 - Consider logistics and procedures and funding needs
- Concern >>> can \$1m do it?
- A NORSDUC steering committee and structure is in place or being formed
- NORSDUC gives eastern industry some piece of mind >>> Is there a value in this? Yes
- Recurring Question >>> who should be paying for this?
 - Farm Bill \$\$\$ to 'Prime the Pump'
- What is NORSDUC capacity/scale? NORSDUC can accommodate research of ½ - 3 acres in size as there is expansion on sites that it can utilize.
- This nursery question has been around for 4 years now – NORSDUC is a start
- Recommendation >>> look for alternative funding? Note, 10201 is not paying for research, only to establish the facility
- Note >>> some continued disagreement on the use of 10201 funds for nursery activities if surrounding the development of BMP's
 - Statement - 10201 funds might better be used for 'Pest Detection'
- Concern >>> as Farm Bill funds increase to the \$45-50m level; does this mean that the nursery portion shall also increase from \$1.3m to about \$6 m for the experimental nursery due to need for continued development and support?
- BMP 'implementation' but not their development (an industry function) is what should be supported

How should 10201(d) funds be used; do we need a shift in priorities?

Scope: Pest (regulated v unregulated) and Commodity:

Summary:

Stakeholders questioned the scope of pests and commodities. We explained that our approach is holistic with the intention of covering the broadest possible spectrum of pests and commodities. We conveyed that our pest priorities are quarantine and non-quarantine regulated pests while acknowledging other significant economic pests.

Session 1

- Are we looking at regulated or non-regulated pests?
 - Reply >>> essentially both, but priority always on regulated pests.
 - The P. ramorum nursery
 - Explore broad program applications

Session 3

- BMP's – can one size 'fit all'? Problem is that many differing pests have essentially different requirements.
 - Reply >>> no, BMP's can be made generic, but then modified to address specific pest concerns.
- Is certification program 'commodity' or 'pest' based?
 - Reply >>> neither >>> its is broader based.
 - Standards are not set to '0' they are based on procedures not just numbers.
 - They're systems based under which procedures are used to ensure pest exclusion

Session 5

- Farm Bill funding >>> wasn't this suppose to be for 'new' pests in focus (primarily)?
 - How do we handle good opportunities to impact things such as gladiolus rust or chrysanthemum rust?
- Would nursery certification programs be holistic?
 - Could be broad
 - Must establish national standards for free movement
 - Could a holistic system also apply to nursery certification? Issue >>> dealing with regulated non-quarantine pests as well.
- Virus free certification programs should be pursued; incl. nematodes

Scope: Regulatory (State v Federal/ Mandatory v Voluntary)

Summary

Stakeholders questioned Federal and State regulatory authorities and certification requirements in terms of voluntary or mandatory. Many States have mandatory certification requirements codified in their regulations. Federal requirements under a national standard are intended to be voluntary but not replace existing State programs.

Session 1

- State vs. Federal regulatory systems >>> exercise caution so as not to unwittingly preempt State authorities. State systems have been in place for long time and work.
 - What is the appropriate Federal role in nursery certification? This questions needs to be asked.
 - Feds should facilitate actions.
 - The US Nursery Certification Program (USNCP)
 - Why should States and nurseries change?
 - 1 overarching certification system to address Standards
- Federal Certification Standards >>> required or voluntary
 - Reply >>> voluntary
- Make sure that the program is not an added burden to the States and industry

Session 2

- Question >>> Does 10201 (Farm Bill) 'require' State certified nursery system?
 - Reply >>> no; the Farm Bill 'encourages' but does not require
-

Session 3

- Is certification voluntary or mandatory? Voluntary
 - Question/Discussion >>> can a voluntary program be effective???
 - System is too much of a patchwork
-

Session 5

- Issue/Concern >>> what happens at 'Lower Levels' in the trade/exchange process >>> pests are moving by hobbyists

Session 6

- Question – How will certified nurseries be coordinated with compliance agreements >>> coordination of the compliance agreement process w/BMP's (e.g. the gypsy moth program)
 - Note >>> is the Compliance Agreement system broken? It puts issues out of site and out of mind
 - Auditing >>> States and Feds need more resources
 - Avoid redundancy in auditing
- State auditing is OK >>> private auditing might be multiplicative and / or duplicative

Communication, Transparency and Clarity of Information Summary

Stakeholders placed strong emphasis on communication, transparency, and clarity of information. They expressed confusion over various certification programs. They repeatedly sought definition of terms. They recommended scoping sessions, more meetings, and outreach and extension.

Session 1

- Engage NPB early in discussions over future directions
- how do we ‘tee-up’ industry to engage in needed conversations in areas of suggested change?
- IMPORTANT (recurring theme) >>> have meetings to talk >>> Communicate
 - Information >>> scoping sessions w/States, industries, regions
 - Process >>> Discussions and meeting w/States and cooperators needed.
- Definitions and terminology needs to be addressed – much confusion possible unless we agree on terms.
 - What’s defined as nursery stock?
 - How do existing certification programs interface with proposed new activities?
 - Be mindful and avoid confusion when talking to different ‘tiers’ of government at the State level
 - Alignment among programs, w/States, etc >>> Lacking

Session 2

- What’s the difference between BMP’s and audit based certification system?
 - Reply >>> nurseries develop BMP’s and audit based systems (gov’ts) verify
- What’s the relationship between nursery certification program (10201 proposed) and USNCP)
 - Reply >>> similar, except that USNCP would also handle export issues
- Question >>> at what point would 10201 (nurseries) funding come to the States?
 - Reply >>> Unsure just yet >>> Note >>> could take 5-10 years for program (State Certification) to harmonize! Yikes!!!
- Pilot programs!
 - Many of them out there (Federal/State) but nobody clear as to what they are, where, and their purpose
 - What are the costs
 - Benefits?
 - Measures or ‘metrics’ for evaluating success
- Stakeholders need a ‘scoping’ session(s).
 - What’s the current state of the State re existing programs?
 - Participants should include Regulators, NPB, NASDA , and APHIS at least
- Terminologies / Definitions >>> these need to be well established and agreed to
- Education/Outreach

- The VS NAHMS program is a good 'outreach' example
- Problem >>> how can we 'outreach' when OMB has requested funding rescission? This may have to wait till more surety over funding
- Hold 'field sessions' information w/stakeholders
- What we'd like to see!!! Ongoing training re current/extant programs and information on new opportunities.

Session 3

- Recommendation:
 - Convene meetings to look at how we'll develop nursery based certification systems. Hold a national 'summit' if needed
- Outreach/Education – important
 - Note >>> consider using county extension services
-

Session 4

- We need more clarity around terminology

Session 5

- Definitions needed >>> a plan to administer and implement voluntary programs (how many programs; domestic vs international)
- Define audit and other terminologies
- Social networking

Session 6

- Food industry parallels
 - Look at food safety parallels for use in what we're doing
 - Food safety matters are not state-by-state matters but rather have an overarching federal mandate
- Nursery Certification programs
 - Coordination w/other countries also needed
 - Coordinate and have a traceability component if products in case problems occur
- Fund use for 2010 and beyond
 - Is the audit-based certification program a 'pilot' program
 - Who would conduct an 'audit'? >>> is audit a joint venture?
 - Audits can be done by industry themselves but need to have both state and federal oversight
- GAP >>> Good Agricultural Practices (Administered by AMS???) An audit and certification inspection system
 - Both scheduled and unscheduled audits

Complexity

Summary

Stakeholders emphasized the complexity of the nursery industry in terms of economies of scale. They expressed concern about technology transfer needs pertaining to operational changes that will be needed to engage in complex certification programs.

Session 2

- Remember >>> nursery industry is complex
 - Different commodities
 - Nursery sizes vary
 - Operation complexity varies
- Important industry requirement!
 - Industry needs 'time' and a 'mechanism' for engagement/enrollment in nursery certification programs
 - This is a 'change management' issue for nurseries; they'll need help navigating

Session 6

- Question – How do small, non-regulated nurseries fit into the regulated scheme?
 - Note >>> if they ship interstate, they must be inspected
 - Casual nurseries need to be included in the plan
- For 2010
 - Look also at the needs of other nursery products and other commodities; such as the Florida insect resistant nurseries concept (need >>> all screenhouses are being done differently)
 - Technology transfer
 - Consider size and scale of activities vs. capability of industry and nurseries

Economic/Cost Benefit Analysis

Summary

Stakeholders emphasized the need for an economic analysis of nursery certification programs to demonstrate the economic benefits to the industry.

Session 2

- Cost/Benefit Analysis (recurring theme – IMPORTANT)
 - Nursery certification program is missing cost/benefit analysis
- Cost/Benefit studies
 - Find ways to get this do w/o much \$\$\$ burden to the program
- Cost/Benefit Analysis >>> If c/b analysis is done and results not ideal what happens?
 - Do not trash the program
 - Note that many benefits are intangible

Session 5

- Economic analysis to back up participation in nursery certification programs (cost/benefit analysis)

Harmonization

Summary

Stakeholders recognize the importance of harmonization but acknowledge the difficulty of achieving a national standard. We explained that harmonization is stakeholder driven.

Session 1

- Determination needs to be made re the status of current State certification systems
 - We need to know baseline before we propose modifying or raising standards.
 - Examine current certification systems to see what's in place.
- How's the current system(s) working?
- Fair east coast to west coast
- Don't we already have nursery certification harmonization?
 - Reply >>> No, not really
- How can nursery certification programs be improved?

Session 2

- Possible FY 2009/2010 activity
 - Bring States together to look at what State nursery certification programs have in common
 - Note >>> some States don't have nursery certification systems
 - Some States >>> system is legislation
 - Other States >>> system is policy
 - GOAL > develop a nursery certification program that other States agree with

Session 4

- ANLA observation >>> California has participated in BMP development but some other states did not want to go along.
- BMP's – for Federally regulated pests, BMP's need to be 'required' for interstate movement of nursery materials
 - Federal regulations should require BMP's
- Nurseries would work w/State regulators to require BMP's; they would then be incorporated by the Feds for use in regulatory development for international movement and interstate commerce

Session 5

- ASTA has produced a Quality Development Guide that carries materials from product development through commercialization (A HACCP approach)
 - This is an industry and Assn developed product
 - A quality management guide (ownership is ASTA)
 - It adds a seed phytosanitary piece

Session 6

- Harmonization >>> this is difficult/hard to do, but we're on the right track w/this

Incentive

Summary

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of incentives to obtain industry participation. They recommended several options including reduced insurance premiums, brand recognition, and improved market access.

Session 1

- Create incentives for going into the program
 - Crop insurance if enrolled in program and a ‘failure’ happens
 - Cost effective
 - Implementable
 - Create buy-in with States and industry
- What are incentives to protect stakeholders (establishments)
 - Indemnities and insurances?
- Buy-in >>> more scientific proof facilitating the movement of plants

Session 2

- Incentives are important – growers need incentives to participate
 - Can a nursery ship to all (or many) of the States?
- Incentives >>> ID the incentives for States and nurseries to participate in programs (esp. for nurseries and industry)
- Incentives >>> what are they???
 - Good visibility for industry to be associated with programs like the USNCP
 - Makes interstate and international shipping easier
 - Fewer phytos??? (1 overarching program instead of separate phytos)
 - Note >>> incentives might be reduced as nurseries get smaller
 - Make plans easier for smaller entities (e.g. NCPN cooperators or small nurseries)
 - Nursery certification manuals??? Make them easier/smaller as entities get less complex or are smaller
- Grower Incentives
 - Recognition (USDA Gold Seal of Approval)
 - If problems happen >>> how might a cooperator be treated differently if they are in a program??? Treated in a way that facilitates them getting back ‘on-line’ as quickly as possible
 - Compensation >>> product destruction compensation
- Grower Tactic to be encouraged >>> Build relationships w/regulators in the good times (incentives to participate) as this will help industry when times get tough
- Incentive >>> Nursery Certification Program participation >>> lets nurseries put a ‘Gold Star’ next to their products
- Phyto’s Issue >>> for now, the way that plants move is under authority of a phyto
- Incentive >>> if a ‘Gold Star’ Nursery has a problem; provide this service:

- SWAT team arrives to do immediate analysis and support of program and nursery
- Activities are validated so as not to necessarily assume failure of nursery to comply
- Nursery allowed to get on-line as soon as possible

Session 3

- Incentives needed to entice cooperators into nursery certification systems
 - Easy market access
 - Less needed inspections
 - Self reporting (you're validated by gov't that you follow the system)
 - Self issue of phytos or appropriate paperwork
 - Lower insurance premiums
 - NOTE >>> these incentives work better w/larger than smaller nurseries
- Research >>> needed to show growers that nursery certification programs are beneficial to them.
 - Need >>> check to see how we're allotting 10201 research dollars.
-

Session 4

- What changes in how we utilize resources for 2010 (and beyond)
 - There's a need for BMP's to be regulatory; States need to help to form BMP's into regulatory systems
 - Training in nursery systems may be pre-mature until existing and perhaps new systems are better evolved
 - Work to gain industry support
 - Maintain integrity of nursery stock
 - Nursery buy-in of certification programs should be pursued in order to facilitate their ability to ship

Session 5

- BMP's >>> Feds should not help develop them, but should assist in their implementation
 - Build certification programs on industry input and their practices
 - Let industry develop the BMP's
 - Enable States to have BMP oversight
 - Should be developed by industry but then validated by the regulators
- Incentives – there must be both incentives and consequences in order to have grower support for nursery certification
 - What incentives are there for industry to participate
 - Can incentives be made 'scalable' to address industry capacity or size
- Build on industry practices

Session 6

- USDA 'Seal of Approval' (Golden Seal)
- Discussion needed to determine how 'seal' and compliance agreements would

Golden Seal of Approval

- Would it travel w/pests thru the system
- Mechanism for tracking movement of certified commodities
- Part of a clean plant program (define what a seal means; incl. auditing program for quality)
- BMP's >>> Nat'l BMP's might be considered
 - But recognize industry and state specific differences
 - Note >>> nat'l standards not meant to replace state activities but rather each serves to support the other
- BMP umbrella
 - Several commodities (complexity) can be included under such umbrellas
 - Could cover procedures (incl. license issuances and displays)
 - WE prefer to use BMP's developed by industry and adopted by the States and signed-off on by the Feds
 - work together. Would compliance agreements disappear?

NCPN

Summary

Stakeholders express support of NCPN but suggested clean plant programs should be industry funded. They see a need to integrate clean plant programs with nursery certification systems.

Session 3

- Clean stock programs
 - USDA should not be in clean stock programs except they should lead to establish same (such as ala NCPN) but that the burden should remain w/industry
 - Programs that are stakeholder driven (e.g. NCPN) are good things – stakeholder supported. Needed for a long time.
- Integrate systems
 - Clean stock programs w/certification systems