

Summary of Breakout Session Discussions for Strategy 6: Enhancing Mitigation Capabilities

Strategy 6: "To provide an unencumbered mechanism to determine the most suitable response and deploy resources quickly to mitigate potential economic and environmental damage and further spread of a detected pest of regulatory significance when deemed appropriate."

The following is summarization of comments and recommendations from participants raised at the June 8-9, 2009 Farm Bill Stakeholder meeting in regards to Strategy 6: Enhancing Mitigation Capabilities.

Summarization of Comments

- Communication of response processes and protocols should be improved. The participants touched on several areas where transparency and understanding would be important through timely engagement of stakeholders.
- Consideration of funding for both preparedness and response activities. Allocation of funds for such areas as offshore pest mitigation, response seed funding, end of year resources.
- Review current initiatives, organizations and groups for collaboration and study of mitigation activities. Participants mentioned several programs, including Caribbean Basin initiative, Perimeter Approach, Interstate Pest Control Compact, Plant Board, IR-4, and USDA.
- Examine ICS role in response activities and methods to enhance capabilities. Such areas as improving exercise feedback; capacity of training activities; responders skill level at onset of response; use of state resources were mentioned.
- Continue development and improve mechanisms to survey, control, and regulate exotic plant pests via action plans. Participants mentioned collaborating with countries that study pests; development of appropriate response framework; potential exit strategies; delimitation methods as potential areas of improvement.

Summarization of Recommendations for 2010

- Develop communication strategy between APHIS and external stakeholders for pest management, to include all aspects of preparedness and response.
- Develop feedback mechanism for reviewing response efforts to document successes, challenges and lessons learned.
- Increase efforts to prioritize research and mitigate offshore pests.
- Enhance training and exercise activities through a holistic approach to identify expectations, roles, and responsibilities of participants and provide a mechanism to test a wide variety of plans and principles.
- Enhance resourcing for action plans to include research of political, economic and geographic components of pest incursions.