



## **Farm Bill Stakeholder Update**

December 27, 2011

In January, APHIS will announce the dates for the FY12 Section 10201 suggestion submission open period. In an effort to make funds available to cooperators as early as possible in 2012, APHIS has decided to reduce the length of the open period to 4 weeks. This change is necessary to ensure that projects can be initiated and funds committed in a responsible manner prior to the end of the fiscal year, and to mitigate the risk that ongoing projects that merit continuation in FY12 won't suffer as a result of lapsed agreements.

I want to reassure everyone, that despite our efforts to expedite the process, we will not sacrifice transparency or undermine the disciplined suggestion review and evaluation process we've worked so hard to implement.

Over the next 3-4 weeks, APHIS will:

- Finalize evaluation criteria with input from the National Plant Board
- Finalize the web-based suggestion submission tool and make instructions on its use available to stakeholders
- Publish Goal-specific stakeholder guidance to help stakeholders develop successful suggestions

As I've mentioned in previous updates, our focus in FY12 is to look critically at the language of the Farm Bill, take stock of the projects we've funded to date, and to employ a solid decision making process built on sound criteria in an effort to ensure we are fulfilling the spirit and intent of Section 10201 of the 2008 Farm Bill.

In an effort to continue to share information, I've attached a brief question and answer document. We will also post a complete list of questions and answers to our web site in January. Please continue to check our web site as new information will be posted regularly in January.

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## **Questions & Answers**

### **What projects will APHIS continue to fund in FY12?**

The process to identify currently funded projects that are likely to receive funding again in FY12 is underway. Funding decisions will be based on the project's ability to address a critical need or sustain or enhance an essential aspect of the safeguarding system, such as certain high-priority pest surveys, the expansion of canine teams for domestic survey, regional diagnostic centers that help with capacity building efforts, the National Ornamentals Research Site at Dominican University of California (NORS-DUC) and other projects that further our pursuit of best management practices and nursery certification programs, and funding for rapid response to new pests. APHIS will use a solid decision making process built on sound criteria in an effort to ensure we are fulfilling the spirit and intent of Section 10201 of the 2008 Farm Bill. The fact that a project received funding in prior years does not guarantee renewed funding.

### **Does APHIS know which plant pest surveys will likely be funded in the FY12 spending plan?**

APHIS has identified a few pest, commodity, and pathway surveys that will be given priority in FY12. To help stakeholders plan and develop new survey suggestions that are aligned with pest detection and surveillance priorities, APHIS will publish survey planning guidelines prior to the beginning of the open period.

### **Will the available funding in FY12 be \$50 million dollars as it was last year?**

The language of the Farm Bill gives the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to make \$50 million available in FY12. APHIS is currently reviewing the slate of projects funded in FY09, FY10, and FY11 and will work with the National Plant Board and other stakeholders to identify projects that should be renewed so that funding available for new projects can be calculated.

### **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 existing projects, will be made in an open and transparent manner using clearly communicated criteria.