

The Deputy Administrator's Safeguarding Award: Veterinary Regulatory Support

The PPQ Deputy Administrator's Safeguarding Award recognizes initiatives and innovations that significantly contribute to furthering the goal of safeguarding American agriculture and natural resources. This award recognizes recipients that (1) establish a new process, operation, procedure, or policy that contributes directly or indirectly to safeguarding or (2) significantly improve an existing process, operation, procedure, or policy that contributes directly or indirectly to safeguarding.

Veterinary Regulatory Support (VRS) receives the Deputy Administrator's Safeguarding Award for showing a significant improvement to the issues raised by USDA APHIS PPQ as causes for increased numbers of international regulated garbage (IRG) violations associated with improper handling of international regulated garbage at airports and seaports. VRS initiated an outreach campaign to educate business representatives at international airports, seaports, military installations, and marinas on how to properly safeguard and dispose of regulated garbage. VRS produced outreach and regulatory materials that directly and indirectly contributed to significant improvements to safeguarding initiatives by APHIS, CBP, and industry.

VRS developed three noteworthy tools. The first of these tools is a Pocket Reference Guide (PRG) for regulatory officials. The PRG includes information on USDA-regulations and approval processes, compliance agreements, and cooperator contact information. The guide also includes photos that guide regulators in the proper techniques for IRG regulation. The PRG improves consistency in the application of IRG procedures and policies and clarifies Federal regulations. The second tool is an updated *No Free Ride* DVD. The updated DVD is an essential educational tool for stakeholders contributing to improvements in safeguarding IRG.

Veterinarians and analysts from VRS traveled to Florida, California, and Virginia to document industry representatives performing proper IRG handling and safeguarding techniques.

Moreover, the new DVD captures current technologies approved by APHIS for the proper handling of IRG. Finally, VRS developed International Regulated Garbage Marina Tear-Off Sheets as an outreach tool for PPQ and CBP officials at seaports and marinas with privately-owned vessels arriving from U.S. possessions and territories.

These innovations directly resulted in a decrease in the number of instances of improper disposal of IRG in domestic waste containers, thereby reducing the risk of the introduction and dissemination of foreign animal and plant pests into the United States. The combined effort to address both animal and plant issues is evidence of VRS' vision and leadership to protect American agriculture and natural resources.