

## 2015 Deputy Administrator's Safeguarding Award: Multi-Agency Response to Fruit Flies in Puerto Rico

PPQ's response to the 2015 exotic fruit fly outbreak in Puerto Rico exemplifies the value of emergency response preparation, teamwork, and efficiency. The incident response established Puerto Rico's first Federal plant pest quarantine and the eradication of two species of exotic fruit flies—Mediterranean (Medfly) and Carambolae—in three separate locations across the island. The quarantine for Medfly was located in Cabo Rojo, while the other two locations were delimiting survey sites, one for an additional single Medfly detection and one for a single Carombola fruit fly detection.

The response succeeded on multiple fronts. Two well-established initiatives, PPQ's National Incident Management Teams (NIMTs) and the Emergency Response Training and Exercise Program, demonstrated their value as team members and local resources benefited from previous experience and training to manage the incident. To support local PPQ efforts, members from all four of PPQ's NIMTs deployed to the incident, including several members on their first response. Subject matter experts from across PPQ and the Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture (PRDA) provided technical guidance.

PPQ and PRDA employed the Incident Command System (ICS), a flexible organizational structure that enables multiple jurisdictions to effectively coordinate an emergency response. Under the ICS, PPQ and PRDA created a Unified Command and worked closely with local cooperators. Using PPQ's Emergency Medfly Action Plan, the response team engaged in delimiting surveys for the three different sites and established regulatory actions, control treatments, and quarantine establishment for the Cabo Rojo Medfly outbreak. Its outreach activities also leveraged local cooperators and media outlets to communicate essential information.

Over the 15-week response, Unified Commanders created a response infrastructure for long-term incident management, eventually transitioning the response to local responders who completed the operation. PPQ lifted the Medfly quarantine on July 29, 2015, after four life stages passed without new detections. Not only did the response safeguard Puerto Rico's fruit and vegetable industries, it also protected the U.S. mainland from some of the most serious agricultural pests known.

Congratulations to the 2015 Multi-Agency Response to Fruit Flies in Puerto Rico team!

Team members include Incident Commanders, Surveyors, Sprayers, State Cooperators, various support staff and the State Plant Health Director who was involved before, during, and after the incident command events:

### NAME/JOB TITLE

Ms. Leyinska Wiscovitch/State Plant Health Director

Mr. David Gruchot/NIMT - Incident Commander

Mr. Michael Hennessey/NIMT - Incident Commander  
Mr. Patrick McPherrren/NIMT - Incident Commander  
Mr. Louis Volpe/NIMT - Incident Commander  
Mr. Joseph Bravata/NIMT - Operation Section Chief  
Mr. William Cheslock/NIMT - Operation Section Chief  
Mr. David Dehn/NIMT - Operation Section Chief  
Mr. Ruben "Bobby" Guerra/NIMT - Liaison Officer  
Mr. Alec Ormsby/NIMT - Liaison Officer  
Ms. Laura Hartmann/NIMT - Logistics Section Chief  
Ms. Wendy Starner/NIMT - Logistics Section Chief  
Ms. Melonie Torillo/NIMT - Logistics Section Chief  
Mr. Greg Aydelotte/NIMT - Planning Section Chief  
Mr. Jason Neil/NIMT - Planning Section Chief  
Ms. Rhonda Santos/NIMT - Public Information Officer  
Ms. Gina Stiltner/NIMT - Safety Officer  
Mr. Douglas Faber/NIMT - Safety Officer  
Ms. Melissa Brassbridge/NIMT - Finance Section Chief  
Ms. Dorothea Jacobs/NIMT - Finance Section Chief  
Ms. Abbie Fox/Director, Fruit Fly Exclusion and Detection  
Mr. John Stewart/PPQ Fruit Fly Policy Manager  
Mr. William Newton/Director- Pest Detection & Emergency Response  
Mr. Jeffrey Davidson/National Operations Manager  
Mr. Carl Lightfoot/National Operations Manager  
Ms. Shaharra Usnick/National Operations Manager  
Mr. Albert Roche/Supervisor/Planning Section Chief  
Ms. Janice Simons/Office Manager/Finance Section Chief  
Ms. Aissha Hernandez/Program Support Assistant/Liaison Officer  
Ms. Maribel Martinez/Administrative Support Asst/Logistics  
Mr. Fernando Lugo/Plant Health Safeguarding Specialist  
Mr. Joel Perez/Plant Health Safeguarding Specialist  
Mr. Rosimar Morales-Mallery/Pest Survey Specialist  
Mr. Robinson Medina/Biological Lab Technician  
Ms. Maria Ramirez/PPQ Aid  
Ms. Gladycia Muñiz/PPQ Technician  
Mr. Michael Mulligan/Treatment Liaison  
Ms. Susan O'Toole/National Pesticide Coordinator  
Ms. Luri Stewart/Logistics Management Specialist  
Ms. Maudeline Daniel/Surveyor  
Mr. Roberto Del Valle/Surveyor  
Mr. Hector Diaz Santiago/Surveyor  
Mr. Eduardo Diaz/Surveyor  
Mr. John Brandon Giles/Group Leader  
Mr. Shi Yih Hung/Surveyor  
Ms. Anna Jones/Group Leader  
Mr. Jose Marengo Santiago/Surveyor  
Mr. Terrance McDermott/Surveyor

Mr. Ramon Montalvo/Surveyor  
Mr. Noel Nieves Acevedo/Surveyor  
Ms. Athena Pappas/Surveyor  
Mr. George Raya/Surveyor  
Mr. Julio Rentas/Surveyor  
Mr. Hector Rivera Maldonado/Surveyor  
Mr. Gerardo Ruiz/SITC Officer  
Mr. Joey Saad/Group Leader  
Mr. Antonio Velazquez/Surveyor  
Ms. Ana Vizcarrondo/Surveyor  
Ms. Dollys Báez/Group Supervisor  
Mr. Mario Ambrosino/PPQ IS  
Mr. Antoine Germeille/IT Specialist  
Mr. Calvin Shuler/PPQ Management  
Mr. Ramon Dones/Subject Matter Expert  
Ms. Lorie Gonzalez/Support  
Mr. Nelson Martinez/Support  
Mr. Freddy Crespo/Support  
Mr. Jesús Torres/Support  
Mr. Francisco Gotay/Support  
Mr. Eliud Rivera/Support  
Mr. Roberto Torres/Support  
Mr. Sergio Lopez/Support  
Mr. Carlos Cruz/Support  
Mr. Milton Haack/Support  
Mr. Wilson Nieves/Support  
Mr. Pablo Burgos/Support  
Mr. Joel Perez/Support  
Mr. Fernando Lugo/Support  
Ms. Norma Rosario/Support  
Mr. Angel Cespedes/Support  
Mr. Enrique Diaz/Support  
Mr. Robinson Medina/Support  
Ms. Edna Cintron/Support  
Mr. Noraly Oliveras/Support  
Mr. Carlos G. Diaz/Support  
Mr. Jose Abreu/Support  
Mr. Alfredo Reyes/Support  
Mr. Arturo Llera-Rodriguez/Support  
Ms. Crystal Zaleski/Support  
Mr. Norberto Gabriel/Support  
Mr. Wilfredo Ojeda/Surveyor  
Mr. Julio Navarro/Surveyor  
Ms. Liliana Alonso/Surveyor  
Dr. Fred Soltero/VMO  
Dr. Jose V. Acosta/VMO

Dr. Cynthia Benoit/VMO  
Mr. Luis Ramos Garriga/Surveyor  
Ms. Wildelia Feliciano/Surveyor  
Ms. Rosemarie Boyle/Surveyor  
Mr. Mohamed Sedegui/Supervisor  
Mr. David Quiñones/Surveyor  
Mr. Luis Sotomayor/Surveyor  
Mr. Omar Marquez/Support  
Ms. Ivonne Quiles/Support  
Ms. Wanda L. Ojeda/Support  
Mr. Bernard Rosado/Support  
Mr. Jose A. Collazo/Support  
Mr. Jose A. Méndez/Support  
Ms. Sonja Cruz/Support  
Mr. Marcelino Borges/CBP Management  
Mr. Salvador Velez/SITC Officer  
Ms. Myrna Comas Pagan/State Cooperator  
Ms. Carmen Oliver/State Cooperator  
Mr. Carlos Aponte/State Cooperator  
Mr. David Padilla/State Cooperator  
Ms. Aixa Ramirez/State Cooperator  
Mr. Jose Quintana/State Cooperator  
Mr. Alberto Feliu/State Cooperator  
Mr. Edgar Lugo/Support  
Mr. Pierre Quiñones/Surveyor  
Ms. Vilmaris Bracero/Surveyor  
Ms. Yaritza Rodriguez/Surveyor  
Mr. Urayoan Diaz/Surveyor  
Ms. Necha Borrero/Surveyor  
Ms. Aleidsha Batista/Surveyor  
Ms. Mayrimar Perez/Surveyor  
Mr. Marcos Saliceti/Surveyor  
Ms. Daliana Ramos/Surveyor  
Mr. Renan Arocho/Surveyor  
Mr. Natanael Valentin/Surveyor  
Mr. Ramon Hernandez/Surveyor  
Mr. Eliezer Cordero/Surveyor  
Ms. Franchezca De Jesus/Surveyor  
Mr. Marcos Rodriguez/Surveyor  
Ms. Normarie Figueroa/Surveyor  
Ms. Lilliam Torres/Surveyor  
Ms. Veronica Llera/Surveyor  
Ms. Linnie Feliciano/Surveyor  
Ms. Natalia Figueroa/Surveyor  
Ms. Maria Padrón/Surveyor  
Ms. Natalia Aponte/Surveyor

Ms. Vilmaliz Rodriguez/Support  
Ms. Becky Roberts/Support  
Mr. Ramon E Santiago Lopez/Sprayer  
Mr. Manuel Quino Rodriguez/Sprayer  
Mr. Uriel Toledo Acosta/Sprayer  
Mr. Edwin Valentin Irizarry/Sprayer  
Mr. Henry Rivera Rios/Sprayer  
Mr. Rafael Aviles Ramaza/Sprayer  
Mr. Elvin Ortiz Medina/Sprayer  
Mr. Luis R. Gonzalez Ayala/Sprayer  
Mr. Eduardo Arce Cuevas/Sprayer  
Mr. Andrés Jimenez Acobe/Sprayer  
Mr. Rubén Valentín Ruperto/Sprayer  
Mr. Luis F. Vélez Lebrón/Sprayer  
Mr. Mario Rios Rivera/Sprayer  
Mr. Alfecedes Sepúlveda Sánchez/Sprayer  
Mr. Luis R. Vélez Cruz/Sprayer  
Mr. Gilberto Quiñones Reyes/Sprayer