Pest Identification

Last Modified:

The National Identification Services (NIS) coordinates and provides national-level identifications of plant pests in support of USDA's regulatory programs. Accurate and timely identifications provide the foundation for quarantine action decisions and are essential in the effort to safeguard the Nation's agricultural and natural resources.

NIS’ national specialists are experts in the fields of botany, entomology, malacology, and mycology and are the final taxonomic authorities for APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine’s (PPQ) identification programs. In addition, NIS collaborates extensively with non-PPQ scientists who are stationed at a variety of institutions around the country, including Federal research laboratories, State departments of agriculture, land-grant universities, and natural history museums.

In addition to morphological examination of physical specimens, NIS promotes the use of alternative diagnostic methods to enhance the speed, accuracy, and precision of the identification process. The Remote Pest Identification Program uses digital imaging technology to capture detailed images of intercepted organisms, which can then be transmitted electronically to qualified specialists for identification. Additionally, NIS staff specializing in molecular systematics provide analyses in support of the agency's pest monitoring programs.

Programs

Agricultural Quarantine and Inspection

The Agricultural Quarantine and Inspection (AQI) program protects U.S. agriculture and natural resources from foreign pests and diseases.

Learn More

Remote Pest Identification

The Remote Pest Identification Program provides advanced digital imaging technology and microscopy equipment to PPQ identifiers and national specialists at locations around the country.

Learn More

Procedures

Plant Pest Confirmation Notifications to the States

Resources

Identification Aids and Services

This page offers recommended resources for those seeking identification assistance.

Print