



PPQ—Pest Exclusion

In today's world, U.S. agriculture and global trade increasingly depend on one another. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service, U.S. agricultural production has grown faster than domestic demand. That means U.S. farmers must rely heavily on export markets to sustain prices and revenues. At the same time, U.S. consumer demand for more diverse foods has steadily increased U.S. agricultural imports over the years.


While U.S. farmers and consumers have much to gain from global trade, it leaves our agricultural and natural resources vulnerable to the foreign plant pests and diseases that can be moved through commerce. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ)—a program within USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)—has been there to safeguard those resources against the introduction and spread of damaging pests and diseases.

At the core of PPQ's safeguarding mission is a continuum of pest exclusion strategies and activities that work together to minimize the plant health risks that come with global trade, international travel, and the smuggling of prohibited agricultural products. This system of overlapping safeguards begins overseas, continues through U.S. ports of entry, and extends across the Nation.

Overseas

PPQ works with foreign governments, importers, and the U.S. military to exclude pests at their origin before shipments reach our shores. PPQ:

- Analyzes data from around the world to find potential plant pest and disease pathways
- Assesses plant pest risks tied to specific commodity imports and determines which measures to apply to prevent foreign pests from moving in commerce
- Helps plant health officials from other countries develop effective systems to control plant pests and diseases locally
- Oversees the inspection and treatment of commodities in more than 25 countries before export to the United States to minimize pest and disease risks
- Monitors commodity treatments on board ships traveling to our country to make sure they are effective
- Partners with the U.S. Department of Defense to inspect military cargo, conveyances, and household goods in the country of origin to prevent the movement of soil, foreign animal diseases, and plant pests to our country



A PPQ analyst meets with foreign producers to better understand how pests of concern might travel to the United States.

At Ports of Entry

PPQ partners with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to inspect cargo, commercial vessels, and international passenger baggage and seize foreign agricultural pests before they can enter the country. PPQ:

- Develops science-based regulations for imports of agricultural products and CBP's inspections of cargo and passenger baggage
- Issues import permits that detail required entry conditions for eligible commodities
- Identifies insects and diseases seized at U.S. ports of entry in foreign-arriving cargo and determines if available safeguards, such as treatments or reconditioning, could be applied to remove them and allow shipments to enter
- Monitors treatment applications that at-risk shipments must undergo at ports of entry before entering U.S. markets
- Inspects live imported plants and seeds for planting to screen out pests and diseases

Each year, PPQ inspects tens of thousands of imported live plant and seed shipments, preventing the introduction of potentially damaging pests.



A PPQ officer surveys a retail market for products that may have been imported illegally.

Across the Nation

PPQ's efforts to detect foreign plant pests and diseases that may have evaded other safeguarding measures continue in our country. PPQ:

- Investigates cases involving the smuggling of agricultural products, which could provide an illicit pathway for pests and diseases to enter the United States or move interstate
- Conducts national surveys to monitor for and find foreign plant pests or diseases

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