

CBP-APHIS Joint Agency Strategic Plan **2022–2026**



U.S. Customs and
Border Protection



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Container ships docked at the Port of Savannah at dusk, July 29, 2021.

Contents

Foreword	3
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GOAL 1: Apply Risk-Based Approaches to Identify and Target High-Risk Pathways and Align Resources

5

Objective 1.1 — Maximize Operational Activities Around High-Risk and Emerging Pests	7
Objective 1.2 — Automate and Expand the Use of Risk-Based Methods throughout U.S. Ports of Entry to Facilitate Trade and Focus Resources on High-Risk Commodities and Pathways	7
Objective 1.3 — Optimize Inspection and Modernize Cargo Clearance by Leveraging Advanced Electronic Data and Data Systems to Facilitate Safe Trade	7
Objective 1.4 — Safeguard Against the Entry of Exotic Pests and Diseases and Promote Biosecurity in the International Passenger Environment	7

GOAL 2: Enhance Program Management and Infrastructure

9

Objective 2.1 — Improve Coordination of Long-Term System Development and Planning to Optimize Resource Allocation and Data Quality	10
Objective 2.2 — Evaluate AQI Training to Validate Impact and Relevance for Optimum Mission Delivery .	10
Objective 2.3 — Enhance Data Accessibility and Information Exchange between Agencies	11
Objective 2.4 — Modernize the AQI Program in Support of Full Cost Recovery	11
Objective 2.5 — Augment Operational Capabilities and Support Services at U.S. Land Borders	11

GOAL 3: Strengthen Partnerships and Enhance Outreach Efforts with Trade Entities to Advance Compliance.....

13

Objective 3.1 — Unify and Enhance Joint Agency AQI External Communications through Standardized Products and Messaging	14
Objective 3.2 — Improve Compliance through Development and Implementation of an Industry-Supported Public Outreach Campaign	14

Performance Measures

15

Conclusion

16



Getty Images

A combine harvests a healthy field of grain.

Foreword

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Customs and Border Protection (CBP) work together to intercept plant and animal health threats associated with the entry of imported goods and international passengers. Together, our actions protect U.S. agriculture and natural resources from harmful plant pests and foreign animal diseases, while keeping international trade and travel moving. We pledge to do all we can to protect America’s two million farms, which support a \$1.1 trillion agricultural and food economy and our Nation’s food supply from foreign plant pests and plant and animal diseases.

Every year, invasive insects and plant diseases cost the United States over \$40 billion in lost crop and forest production. That figure does not include the significant costs Federal, State, and local government agencies; farmers; and industry incur to combat these threats once they become established in the environment. Invasive pest and disease incursions can also result in foreign export markets closing to U.S. agricultural products. In calendar year 2021, U.S. agricultural exports were worth a record-breaking \$177 billion. APHIS and CBP are on the front lines combating these threats every day through the Agricultural Quarantine Inspection (AQI) program. Through our partnership, APHIS and CBP provide the public and our stakeholders — producers, food processors, importers, and important supply chain participants — the protections they need to ensure a safe and reliable food supply.

Building upon this successful collaboration, APHIS and CBP have created a new joint strategic plan, which will guide the AQI program through 2026. This five-year plan highlights the top priorities and strategic goals of the combined APHIS/CBP agricultural mission, which will help us deliver the AQI program with maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The plan employs strategies such as risk-based approaches to identify and target high-risk pathways and align resources, enhance program management and infrastructure, and strengthen partnerships and outreach efforts with our various trade entities. As a result, our new plan will not only ensure we are successful in the short term, but it will also contain the guidance we need to meet the challenges for years to come.

This strategic plan outlines how we will jointly accomplish this through the AQI program. Millions of people are counting on us to maintain the flow of trade and travel while protecting our Nation’s farms, forests, and food supply from foreign pest and disease threats. We won’t let them down. We look forward to working with you — our partners, cooperators, and employees — to safeguard U.S. agriculture and natural resources. These valuable resources, and those who depend on them for their livelihoods, rely on us to fulfill this critical mission.



Matthew Rhoads
Associate Deputy Administrator
Pest Exclusion and Import Programs
Plant Protection and Quarantine
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service



John Sagle
Acting Executive Director
Agriculture Programs and Trade Liaison
Office of Field Operations
U.S. Customs and Border Protection





The Bridge of the Americas is the busiest of four border crossings that make up the El Paso port of entry, adjacent to Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

GOAL 1:

Apply Risk-Based Approaches to Identify and Target High-Risk Pathways and Align Resources.

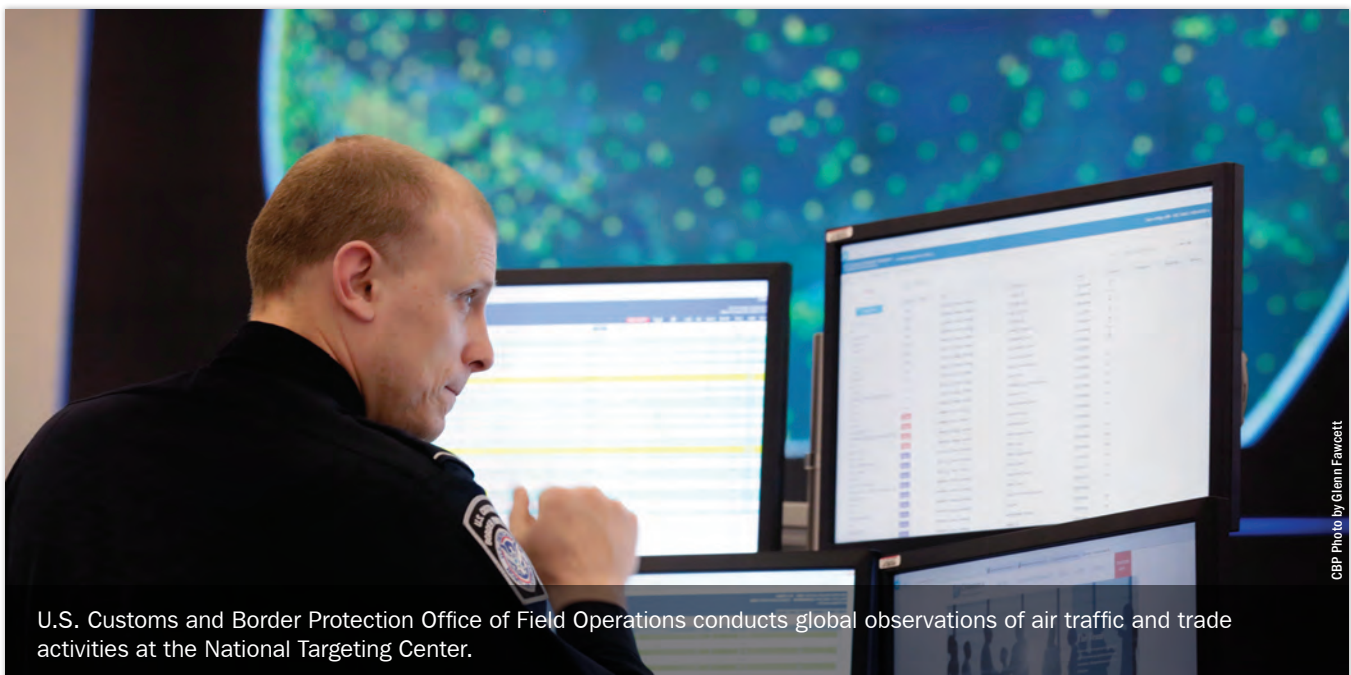


Between 2018 and 2020, APHIS and CBP cleared an average of 562 million tons of agricultural cargo into the United States per year at over 200 U.S. ports of entry. In addition, during that time we cleared a yearly average of 91.6 million international airline passengers arriving in the country. It is imperative that we maximize the effectiveness of our pest and disease exclusion

activities given the sheer volume of imports into the United States. By focusing inspection resources on the highest risk pathways and cargo, and by optimizing targeting and inspection technology, we can achieve a higher rate of return on pest interceptions and enforcement actions.

To enable risk-based decision making and to

ensure the program's effectiveness, we will continue to employ and improve data analysis, risk-based approaches, and electronic data systems to zero in on the true risk that requires the most resources. The AQI program continually evaluates, tests, and applies cutting-edge technologies to more effectively detect and



U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Field Operations conducts global observations of air traffic and trade activities at the National Targeting Center.

CBP Photo by Glenn Fawcett

address plant pests and diseases arriving in foreign shipments and passenger baggage. We are also refining our ability to use the pest interception data we collect during U.S. port-of-entry inspections to better predict and reduce pest threats approaching our shores. Together, these advances strengthen our ability to exclude pests, focus resources on the highest risks, and safeguard our nation's agricultural security — all at the speed of commerce.

In 2018, APHIS and CBP began implementing risk-based sampling, a data-driven way to sample imported commodities for inspection at U.S. ports of entry. Commodities with significantly lower pest interceptions are eligible for reduced inspection rates, which means they can move more efficiently through ports and into consumer markets.



Experts from the APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine and CBP carry out the Agricultural Quarantine Inspection program at the nation's borders and ports of entry.



A CBP agriculture specialist inspects a shipment of green chili peppers for pests and diseases at the Columbus, New Mexico, port of entry.

Commodities with high pest interception rates are subjected to higher rates or more intensive inspections. This model allows us to focus resources where the risks are greater. It also

provides an incentive for importers to ship clean, compliant commodities. Over the next five years, we will implement risk-based sampling in more ports and for more commodities. ■

Objective 1.1

Maximize operational activities around high-risk and emerging pests.

Strategy 1.1.1

Develop a joint agency mechanism to identify high-risk-pests and pathways to inform operational priorities.

Strategy 1.1.2

Assess capabilities to target and intercept emerging pests in high-risk pathways through joint scenarios or tabletop exercises.

Performance Measure:

Increased resources focused on high-risk activities.

Objective 1.2

Automate and expand the use of risk-based methods throughout U.S. ports of entry to facilitate trade and focus resources on high-risk commodities and pathways.

Strategy 1.2.1

Expand the scope of Risk Based Sampling by adding new commodities and participating port locations.

Strategy 1.2.2

Develop automated systems to streamline cargo processing based on phytosanitary risk.

Performance Measure:

Increased automation and expansion of risk-based methodology.

Objective 1.3

Optimize inspection and modernize cargo clearance by leveraging advanced electronic data and data systems to facilitate safe trade.

Strategy 1.3.1

Increase use of advanced electronic data elements to enhance the inspection process, refine targeting capabilities, and improve cargo trend analysis.

Performance Measure:

Reduced processing time for low-risk agricultural cargo.

Objective 1.4

Safeguard against the entry of exotic pest and diseases and promote biosecurity in the international passenger environment.

Strategy 1.4.1

Optimize international passenger clearance methods in managing animal and plant health risks.

Performance Measure:

Conducted risk assessment of international passenger pathways.

Flowers to be inspected by U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agriculture Specialists at the Laredo Port of Entry, Texas.



APHIS experts inspect imported shipments of propagative plant material at 16 APHIS plant inspection stations across the country.

GOAL 2: Enhance Program Management and Infrastructure



Successful management of the AQI program requires long-term vision and planning to ensure we are making advancements in program management and infrastructure to support the needs of the future. By making strategic improvements in how we do our business, we will be more agile in our response to new, emerging, and future agricultural pest and disease risks. To support long-term program needs, we need to focus on advances in

electronic data collection and other essential information technology systems, modernizing the administration of the AQI user fee, and prioritizing efforts to manage risks and facilitate clearance at U.S. land borders.

Close and effective collaboration between APHIS and CBP is crucial to this effort. We will further promote this collaboration by ensuring our business processes are fully

integrated to expedite regulatory decision making and advancing the One U.S. Government approach to U.S. border clearance. Better program management will ensure that all AQI costs are recovered through user fees, which is a major element of this goal. These efforts benefit the economic interests of U.S. and foreign businesses as well as the U.S. taxpayer.

APHIS and CBP employees are our most valuable resource. To develop them and set them up for success, we will identify opportunities for professional development. In addition, cross-agency collaboration will increase information and idea sharing and strengthen professional relationships. ■



Two Asian longhorned beetle larvae infest split wood. This invasive tree pest is a threat to U.S. forests.

Objective 2.1

Improve coordination of long-term system development and planning to optimize resource allocation and data quality.

Strategy 2.1.1

Establish a shared vision for AQI Information Technology system integration and a long-term plan for support of quarantine inspection business processes.

Strategy 2.1.2

Improve integration of business processes to enhance data quality and support regulatory decision making at ports of entry.

Performance Measure:

Completed outlining system requirements and data quality standards.

Objective 2.2

Evaluate AQI training to validate impact and relevance for optimum mission delivery.

Strategy 2.2.1

Review and assess AQI workforce development opportunities to establish a new strategic framework to support AQI curriculum development and delivery.

Strategy 2.2.2

Increase opportunities for collaboration between CBP and APHIS field personnel.

Performance Measure:

Completion of a strategic framework highlighting developmental opportunities.



APHIS' National Detector Dog Training Center trains APHIS and CBP canines and their handlers to intercept prohibited agricultural items at airports and mail and express carrier centers.



A CBP agriculture specialist and her canine partner inspect a traveler's carry-on bag at the San Francisco International Airport.

Objective 2.3

Enhance data accessibility and information exchange between agencies.

Strategy 2.3.1

Establish the data required by both agencies to evaluate AQI program performance and analyze pest risk.

Strategy 2.3.2

Modernize data sharing agreements to meet the future needs of the AQI program.

Strategy 2.3.3

Capitalize on advancements in data exchange technology to meet joint agency objectives.

Performance Measure:

Increased data accessibility between agencies.

Objective 2.4

Modernize AQI program in support of full cost recovery.

Strategy 2.4.1

Evaluate import trends and pathway risk to inform and update AQI User Fee Activity Based Cost Model.

Strategy 2.4.2

Improve and update resource and staffing management tools used in the AQI Program to support long term program management and strategic planning.

Strategy 2.4.3

Promote efficient and effective fee collection and auditing process with a goal to verify full cost recovery and agricultural user fee compliance.

Performance Measure:

Developed analyses and implemented program improvements to increase percentage of costs recovered.

Objective 2.5

Augment operational capabilities and support services at U.S. land borders.

Strategy 2.5.1

Assess policy and operations to increase program efficiencies and identify target areas for improvement.

Strategy 2.5.2

Advance program improvements to expedite clearance of low-risk agricultural cargo at U.S. land borders.

Performance Measure:

Completed operational assessment of U.S. land borders.

Trucks await inspection at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection port of entry in Brownsville, TX.



CBP agriculture specialists intercepted 262,237 pounds of prohibited animal products at the Los Angeles/Long Beach seaport between October–December 2021.

CBP Photo by Jaime Ruiz

GOAL 3:

Strengthen Partnerships and Enhance Outreach Efforts with Trade Entities to Advance Compliance



The success of the AQI program is greatly dependent on the compliance and engagement of our stakeholders. Importers, brokers, shipping lines, and the general public all have a responsibility for upholding the strict phytosanitary standards that APHIS and CBP enforce. APHIS and CBP cannot fully succeed in our mission without the engagement of our key stakeholders. Consistent and close stakeholder communication will always be an essential part of our mission's success.

Our outreach to industry and the public will assist

them in complying with our import requirements. Those requirements are designed to safeguard American agricultural and natural resources. Lack of compliance puts those resources — and the many livelihoods that depend on them — at risk. By making our requirements

easily accessible and understandable to our stakeholders, we not only protect agriculture and the environment, but we also help industry avoid penalties, costly delays, and the potential for the destruction or re-export of their imported goods. ■



Inspectors from CBP and APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine intercept illegal bushmeat in international mail parcels.

Objective 3.1

Unify and enhance joint agency AQI external communications through standardized products and messaging.

Strategy 3.1.1

Expand and refresh joint agency branded outreach materials.

Strategy 3.1.2

Analyze new media platforms for joint agency outreach and communications.

Performance Measure:

Completion of a unified media analysis and collaboration platform.

Objective 3.2

Improve compliance through development and implementation of an industry-supported public outreach campaign.

Strategy 3.2.1

Prioritize joint agency stakeholder outreach and training to improve compliance.

Performance Measure:

Implementation of an outreach campaign to improve compliance of agricultural regulations.



CBP agriculture specialist processes passengers who have food products in their luggage at the Port of Philadelphia.

Performance Measures

GOAL 1: Apply Risk-Based Approaches to Identify and Target High-Risk Pathways and Align Resources

Objective 1.1 — Maximize operational activities around high-risk and emerging pests.

Performance Measure: Increased resources focused on high-risk activities.

Objective 1.2 — Automate and expand the use of risk-based methods throughout U.S. ports of entry to facilitate trade and focus resources on high-risk commodities and pathways.

Performance Measure: Increased automation and expansion of risk-based methodology.

Objective 1.3 — Optimize inspection and modernize cargo clearance by leveraging advanced electronic data and data systems to facilitate safe trade.

Performance Measure: Reduced processing time for low-risk agricultural cargo.

Objective 1.4 — Safeguard against the entry of exotic pests and diseases and promote biosecurity in the international passenger environment.

Performance Measure: Conducted risk assessment of international passenger pathways.

GOAL 2: Enhance Program Management and Infrastructure

Objective 2.1 — Improve coordination of long-term system development and planning to optimize resource allocation and data quality.

Performance Measure: Completed outlining system requirements and data quality standards.

Objective 2.2 — Evaluate AQI training to validate impact and relevance for optimum mission delivery.

Performance Measure: Completion of a strategic framework highlighting developmental opportunities.

Objective 2.3 — Enhance data accessibility and information exchange between agencies.

Performance Measure: Increased data accessibility between agencies.

Objective 2.4 — Modernize the AQI program in support of full cost recovery.

Performance Measure: Developed analyses and implemented program improvements to increase percentage of costs recovered.

Objective 2.5 — Augment operational capabilities and support services at U.S. land borders.

Performance Measure: Completed operational assessment of U.S. land borders.

GOAL 3: Strengthen Partnerships and Enhance Outreach Efforts with Trade Entities to Advance Compliance

Objective 3.1 — Unify and enhance joint agency AQI external communications through standardized products and messaging.

Performance Measure: Completion of a unified media analysis and collaboration platform.

Objective 3.2 — Improve compliance through development and implementation of an industry-supported public outreach campaign.

Performance Measure: Implementation of an outreach campaign to improve compliance of agricultural regulations.

Conclusion

America's two premier agencies on agricultural protection — CBP and APHIS — have developed a new strategic plan that addresses areas of joint operation where additional focus will move the Agricultural Quarantine Inspection program forward in protecting the nation's agriculture, environment, and economy. The previous plan served APHIS and CBP well for the past several years, stopping numerous pests from entering the United States and saving America's agriculture, natural resources, jobs, and the economic well-being of the country. This new document helps both agencies

move forward to address the new challenges in their joint mission. The new *CBP-APHIS Joint Agency Strategic Plan 2022–2026* has three main goals in mind: identify, enhance, and strengthen.

It will apply risk-based approaches to identify and target high-risk pathways and align resources. Through a number of new initiatives, it will maximize operational activities around high-risk and emerging pests by optimizing and modernizing cargo inspection and clearance through advanced electronic data gathering, among other methods.

It will enhance the program's management and infrastructure

by improving coordination of long-term system development and planning to optimize resource allocation and data quality. This includes establishing a shared vision for the Agricultural Quarantine Inspection IT system.

Finally, the joint plan strengthens partnerships and enhances outreach efforts with our various trade entities to ensure greater compliance.

Several metrics throughout the three goals will measure the success of each and give both agencies opportunities to adjust the plan where needed. ■



APHIS seized this prohibited imported meat product and put it on hold for destruction to protect U.S. animal health.



A CBP Agriculture Specialist inspects containers of imported goods for invasive insect and plant species at the Port of Baltimore.

Together,
CBP and APHIS
safeguard U.S.
agriculture and natural
resources from harmful
plant pests and foreign
animal diseases while
keeping international
trade and travel
moving.



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