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2006 ANNUAL MEETING Milwaukee, Wisconsin

RESOLUTION NO. 4

OPERATIONAL REVIEW OF THE NETHERLANDS PRE-CLEARANCE PROGRAM

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the occurrence of viruses, foliar nematodes, root-knot nematodes, bulb mites and noxious weeds detected on perennial stock shipped from the European Union. Commercial industry, along with state agricultural inspectors, have detected pathogens including arabis mosaic virus and Hosta virus X in Hosta plants, nematodes in bulbs and perennials, and serious weeds such as *Inula britannica* and *Rorippa sylvestris* associated with bare-root perennials. This near-epidemic of regulated non-quarantine pests is especially noticeable for plant material originating from the Netherlands and is likely due to the tremendous volume of material originating from that country. The frequency of viruses has reached such high proportions that many importers have expressed their desires to limit or eliminate the European Union as a source of perennials. Based on the threats, high-end retail and wholesale operators have adopted routine testing for viruses and nematodes to ensure their clientele are receiving quality pest-free plants.

The high incidence of infected or infested plant material has become an economic burden on U.S. importing firms that grow out the product before sale. Since the infected stock is dormant when it arrives, the pest status is generally not evident until the individual nurseryman has invested time and resources in production for the retail marketplace. By the time the disease or pest symptoms are expressed, the financial loss has occurred. Bulb importers and resellers of dormant plants escape some of the investment loss, yet infested material sold by them finds a direct pathway to backyards across America.

The continuing interception of pests and diseases raises concern that a pathway exists for entry of quarantine significant organisms as well as regulated non-quarantine pests. This pathway has potential for the introduction of harmful organisms, which could impact multiple agricultural sectors. This is especially true for pathogens with multiple host species such as arabis mosaic virus or nematodes such as Colombia root-knot nematode, which could damage the potato crop in the Central United States and also adversely affect exports of plant materials to foreign markets. It appears existing pre-clearance programs in Europe, while adequate for certain pests and diseases, need to be re-evaluated for safeguarding failure potential for these more elusive pests and diseases which are being encountered on imported plant material.

RESOLVED, by the National Plant Board at its annual meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Wednesday, August 16, 2006, that support be given to completion of a pre-clearance operational program review for

perennial plants and bulbs originating from The Netherlands and that USDA, APHIS, PPQ move promptly to implement the recommendations resulting from the 2006 review.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that USDA and Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection work cooperatively with state departments of agriculture and firms importing plant material into the United States in order to conduct a higher level of quality control inspection at U.S. ports of entry for those pests and diseases which now elude detection through the existing program.

Motion to adopt: Gene Cross, Chair, Resolutions/Policy Committee
Seconded by: Harry Fulton, MS Member

Distribution:

Honorable Michael Johanns, Secretary of Agriculture, USDA
Dr. Chuck Lambert, Deputy Under Secretary, USDA
Michael Chertoff, Secretary, DHS
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Vic Harabin, Eastern Regional Director, USDA, APHIS, PPQ
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Rick Kirchhoff, CEO, NASDA
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Bob Ehart, NASDA
Ken Rauscher, President, National Plant Board
Regional Plant Board Presidents