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October 22, 2016

Osama El-Lissy,
Deputy Administrator
USDA APHIS PPQ
Washington DC

Dear Osama:

The members of the National Plant Board strongly support the Cooperative Ag Pest Survey (CAPS) program and recognize its significant role in safeguarding America's agricultural resources. The CAPS program supports critical survey work for commodity pests of national significance and other pest detection activities by the states. The State Survey Coordinator position and additional staff are often funded fully, or in part by CAPS infrastructure cooperative agreements. The efforts of the State Survey Coordinator position support not only CAPS projects, but Farm Bill and other pest detection projects.

State cooperators acknowledge the difficulties USDA APHIS PPQ faces in executing agreements when monies are delayed due to the federal budget process. These delays in funding are most impactful when the pest survey window for a particular pest occurs before the agreement is executed.

The members of the National Plant Board request that efficiencies be implemented wherever possible in order to distribute CAPS funding. We also request that you consider prioritizing distribution of CAPS funding to projects with real biology-driven timing issues so that survey work is not negatively impacted for those states and pests where survey needs are imminent.

Sincerely,

Joe Collins, President
National Plant Board

CC:

Paula Henstridge, Assistant Deputy Administrator, USDA APHIS PPQ
John Bowers, National Survey Coordinator, USDA APHIS PPQ
Lisa Jackson, National Operations Manager, USDA APHIS PPQ
Collin Wamsley, Central Plant Board President
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