

## Comprehensive Review of the *Phytophthora ramorum* Program

September 5, 2008

Contact: Gray Haun, National Plant Board President

### Background and Status

Since 1995, *Phytophthora ramorum*, the causal agent of sudden oak death, has been a plant pathogen of regulatory significance. Causing oak mortality in coastal California, Oregon, and Washington, the host range and number of nurseries and garden centers found to be positive continues to expand. The regulated hosts and plants associated with *Phytophthora ramorum* now include 117 species, with five of those encompassing the entire genus. Under the leadership of USDA, APHIS, PPQ, cooperators have jointly responded to this pest on a national level. Despite an ongoing and intense effort to regulate nursery stock and other articles from known infested areas in California, Oregon, and Washington, infected nursery stock continues to be shipped to other regions of the United States.

The USDA, APHIS, PPQ, in joint cooperation with the National Plant Board, established a working group in 2005 for the sole purpose of providing program feedback as related to the regulatory process. Additionally, the National Plant Board provided a position paper detailing its concerns related to the potential impacts of *Phytophthora ramorum* on areas presently free of this pest. Current research related to this pest continues and most recent literature has documented that *Phytophthora ramorum* can be present in potting media of asymptomatic non-host plants.

pathogen to spread via the movement of nursery stock and other regulated articles. Concerted efforts must now focus on closing known existing pathways and continuing to identify and address other potential pathways that continue to contribute to the spread of this disease.

The National Plant Board fully supports convening an expert panel for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive *Phytophthora ramorum* Program review. This panel, as part of their review and assessment process, would develop recommendations to improve the current policies and procedures necessary to protect areas of the United States that are currently free of *Phytophthora ramorum*. The results of the comprehensive review are expected to be completed by February 1, 2009 and made available directly to the USDA, APHIS, PPQ and the National Plant Board.

### National Plant Board-Policy Directives

The National Plant Board fully supports the ongoing review and evaluation of current research relevant to pathways that potentially permit this