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September 30, 2010

Ms. Rebecca Bech
Deputy Administrator for Plant Protection and Quarantine
USDA, APHIS, PPQ
Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building
14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W. Room 301-E
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Rebecca:

The National Plant Board (NPB) is requesting for USDA, APHIS, PPQ staff to work cooperatively with other federal agencies with biocontrol responsibilities, including USDA, FS, ARS, and NIFA, along with the NPB to develop a national strategy that meets both state and federal biocontrol needs. Additionally, the NPB is requesting for USDA, APHIS, PPQ to identify budget needs and resources needed to meet this critical management need.

The management tools for dealing with invasive pests specifically exotic pests are becoming more limited. The use of pesticides, including mating disruption pheromones, especially in metropolitan areas, has become very challenging, if not impossible. Historically, biological control agents and sterile insects have been very good management options for a number of exotic pests including fruit flies, gypsy moth, and pink hibiscus mealy bug. With the loss of pesticides and other chemical solutions, biocontrol and sterile agents provide the needed long term, economically feasible, and socially acceptable solutions to managing some exotic pests.

Effective implementation of biocontrol and/or sterile insect programs is based on a collaborative effort between state plant regulatory officials and the federal agencies involved in biological control (USDA, APHIS, PPQ, FS, ARS and NIFA). The success of this effort would be greatly enhanced with a multi-agency strategic plan that includes a consideration of facilities (size and location), pest priorities, staffing, academic support, and budget needs.

Rebecca Bech
Biocontrol
September 30, 2010
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As such, I am committed to working with you and others to complete the development of this national strategy. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to share the concerns of the NPB and look forward to moving forward with this initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl P. Schulze". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "C" and "S".

Carl Schulze, President

cc: Dr. Rob Mangold, USDA, FS
Dr. Edward Knipling, USDA, ARS
Dr. Roger Beachy, Director, USDA, NIFA
Vic Harabin, Eastern Regional Director, USDA, APHIS, PPQ
Phil Garcia, Western Regional Director, USDA, APHIS, PPQ
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