

## Thousand Cankers Disease Policy Statement

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**Policy Issuance Date:** August 11, 2011

### Background and Status

Thousand cankers disease (TCD), caused by a fungus of the genus *Geosmithia* and transmitted by a small twig beetle (*Pityophthorus juglandis*), remains a significant threat to the nation's walnut resources. TCD typically kills a tree within two to three years after initial symptoms are expressed, but those symptoms may not express for several years after initial infection. TCD has caused dieback and mortality of black walnut in several Western states over the past decade. Major symptoms of the disease include yellow flagging of branch tips, branch mortality, numerous small cankers on the branches, and evidence of the tiny bark beetles. In 2010, TCD was detected in Eastern Tennessee, clearly within the native range of black walnut. This confirmation represented the first detection of the disease east of the Mississippi River. Black walnut is native to Eastern North America and considered to be one of the most highly-valued tree species. Outside its native range, it has been planted extensively as an ornamental, for timber, and for nut production. An USDA, APHIS pathway assessment estimated the value of black walnut timber in the eastern United States at over \$500 billion. The potential damage of TCD to eastern forests is significant, given the widespread distribution of eastern black walnut, the susceptibility of this tree species to the disease and the capacity of the fungus and beetle to invade new trees and survive under a wide range of climatic conditions.

TCD is difficult to contain and control. A combination of methods, including prevention, insecticides for control of the associated beetle, sanitation, and regulatory actions may be useful in potentially stopping or slowing the movement of this disease.

Regulatory actions have been taken by a number of states, including the adoption and enforcement of exterior quarantines designed to prevent the premature introduction of TCD into their state. From a national perspective, the USDA-Forest Service, along with state forestry agencies, state regulatory agencies, National Plant Diagnostic Network, state university researchers and USDA-APHIS have organized an executive team and technical working group to develop a national framework for the management of TCD.

### National Plant Board Policy and Directives

The National Plant Board fully supports those initiatives which foster federal, state, and local government and private industry to:

- Develop and implement plans to reduce or stop the spread of plant diseases such as TCD.
- Ensure decisions regarding plant pest suppression and prevention are risk-based.
- Ensure those pest risk mitigation strategies that are adopted provide an acceptable level of agricultural, environmental, and economic protection.

The National Plant Board further supports the National Response Framework developed by a multiagency work group comprised of state and federal entities, under the guidance of the USDA-Forest Service. Furthermore, the National Plant Board supports the USDA-Forest Service leading and implementing a TCD management program that involves and works cooperatively with USDA APHIS-PPQ, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Universities, State Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources and other agencies and associations. USDA-Forest Service, USDA, APHIS and other federal agencies should also adequately fund this management program which should be organized and implemented in a manner similar to the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid management program or Gypsy Moth Slow the Spread Program. This program should include an ongoing effort of USDA Forest Service and APHIS in methods development, survey, outreach and sanitation efforts. To ensure acceptance and feasibility, the US Forest Service and USDA APHIS, while developing treatment methods for wood products, should engage industry in those processes to ensure that the treatments being researched can be practically applied by the forest products industry.

Finally, the National Plant Board encourages USDA APHIS to immediately recognize the many state exterior quarantines for TCD under the program now known as the Federally Recognized State Managed Phytosanitary (FRSMP) Program, with the result of applying restrictions on walnut wood from Mexico and any other country that is determined to harbor *Geosmithia morbida* or *Pityophthorus juglandis*.