

FOR INFORMATION
DA-2006-12
March 31, 2006

SUBJECT: Availability of a Draft Version of the Citrus Plant Health Response Program (CHRP), Availability for Comment and the Appointment of a CHRP National Coordinator

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

On March 7, 2006, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) released a draft version of the CHRP and is now receiving comments from interested parties that will be considered as APHS moves forward with activities required implementing the CHRP plan. It was developed in response to several recent events in Florida that have presented serious challenges to U.S. citrus production. On January 10, 2006, the Secretary announced that the United States Department of Agriculture concluded that citrus canker had spread as a result of recent hurricanes and legal delays to the eradication program, to the extent that eradication of this disease was no longer possible.

APHIS is working with representatives of the State of Florida and other citrus-producing states, State and Federal scientists, and representatives from the U.S. citrus industry to develop a comprehensive systems approach for managing citrus canker, citrus greening, and other pests of regulatory significance. The intent of the CHRP is to provide a framework of science-based standards and production practices that will improve early pest detection through enhanced surveillance and to safeguard the industry from regulatory pests. This will be accomplished by establishing a systems approach that addresses all aspects of citrus production, harvest, and handling that will facilitate production of high-quality citrus groves and fruit. The systems approach will prevent the spread of diseases and pests to other citrus-producing states while preserving citrus trade.

The CHRP is available on the APHIS web site at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/pdmp/citrushealth/>. The site provides an opportunity for readers to comment on the CHRP. APHIS and the State of Florida are reviewing regulations and quarantines as well as program activities to determine the regulatory framework under which the CHRP will be implemented. The CHRP is a living document; therefore, it will continually be modified to capture advances in science and production practices to enhance safeguarding of U.S. citrus from the adverse impacts associated with exotic citrus pests.

I have appointed Mr. Patrick Gomes, Senior Regional Program Manager located in Raleigh, North Carolina, as the National CHRP Coordinator. In this role, Mr. Gomes will coordinate the national development and implementation of the CHRP.

Mr. Gomes has 30 years of experience in APHIS having served as a Plant Protection and Quarantine Officer, Area Identifier and Entomologist, Survey Program Coordinator, Co-Director of the Cooperative Mexico Medfly Eradication Program, and Assistant Area Director for Central America. He has worked with APHIS' International Programs as part of the Food and Agriculture Organization/International Atomic Energy Agency Team in Europe where he developed regional pest management and eradication strategies. He has served as an Assistant Regional Director and was responsible for the Mexico-Guatemala-Belize Sterile Fly Barrier Program.

Mr. Gomes will continue to facilitate and coordinate meetings and targeted activities involving Federal and State regulators, scientists, and the U.S. citrus industry that are required to implement the CHRP. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Gomes to this new and challenging role, and I encourage you to keep current with the CHRP on the APHIS web site.

/s/ John H. Payne for

Richard L. Dunkle
Deputy Administrator
Plant Protection and Quarantine