

FOR INFORMATION  
DA-2008-04  
January 25, 2008

SUBJECT: Selection of New National Program Coordinator for Biocontrol Programs

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is pleased to announce the selection of Dr. Jo-Ann Bentz-Blanco as the Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) National Program Coordinator for Biocontrol Programs, effective January 20, 2008. This is a position in PPQ's Emergency and Domestic Programs staff, in Riverdale, Maryland.

Dr. Bentz-Blanco grew up in Puerto Rico and received her Ph.D. in Entomology with a minor in Biometrics/Statistics from the University of Maryland in 1993. She then worked as a Research Entomologist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service studying integrated pest management and biological control of insect pests and disease vectors associated with floral plants and landscape trees and shrubs, particularly focusing on whiteflies and leafhoppers.

In 2005, Dr. Bentz-Blanco joined APHIS' Veterinary Services as the National Program Manager for the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program and for the St. Croix Tropical Bont Tick Eradication Program. As such, she was responsible for program planning and evaluation, updating regulatory work plans, and requesting contingency funds to support her programs. She also served as the Chair of the USDA delegation to the U.S.–Mexico Binational Tick Committee.

As the National Program Coordinator for Biocontrol Programs, Dr. Bentz-Blanco will work with PPQ's Regional Biocontrol Program Managers and Center for Plant Health Science and Technology's Biocontrol Coordinator to guide the Agency's biocontrol activities. The goal of PPQ biological control activities is to safeguard America's agricultural production and natural areas from significant economic losses and negative impacts caused by insects, other arthropods, nematodes, weeds and diseases of regulatory significance. PPQ biological control activities seek to mitigate both off-shore and domestic pest threats.

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Bentz-Blanco to her new position. She can be reached at Area Code (301) 734-5930 and her email address is [JoAnn.Bentz-Blanco@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:JoAnn.Bentz-Blanco@aphis.usda.gov).

**/s/ Paul R. Eggert for**

Rebecca A. Bech  
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