Harmonization Plans

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What is a harmonization plan?

A tool used by regulatory agencies to provide consistent, uniform pest risk mitigation methods to:

• Establish a framework that encourages states to consistently and appropriately characterize pest risk and infestation status based on current scientific and field information;

• Pursue uniform adoption and implementation of pest risk mitigation measures to reduce pest risk to a level acceptable to receiving states.
What is a harmonization plan?

- Generally involves growing practices, inspections, and/or treatment protocols, to meet a less stringent pest freedom standard than a formal quarantine.

- It is not a federal quarantine, does not override individual state regulations, and will not preclude a quarantine, regulation, or regulatory action taken by a state.
What isn’t a harmonization plan?

• A one size fits all approach

• An easy fix or magic bullet

• Appropriate for all pests and all situations
Examples of harmonization plans

- National Plant Board Japanese Beetle Harmonization Plan
- State National Seed Potato Harmonization Plan
- Light Brown Apple Moth harmonization Plan
NPB Japanese Beetle Harmonization Plan

- Originally established in 1998
- Revised in 2004 & 2016
- Purpose is to protect uninfested states, while providing shippers consistent, easy to understand certification requirements
- Requirements pertain to regulated articles not covered under existing federal JB quarantine.
- 10 states maintain individual quarantines
State Nat’l Seed Potato Harmonization Plan

• Began as an initiative of National Potato Council in early 2000s
  – Concerns were raised that seed potato certification programs were state run and had different rules and regulations

• Purpose – to facilitate U.S. international negotiations on market access for potatoes by
  – Developing a minimum set of pest management and certification standards
  – Establishing a state commitment to those standards and establishing federal oversight over the implementation of the MOU
Light Brown Apple Moth Harmonization Plan

• Developed in 2012

• Used the JBHP as a template

• Concern at time was continued reductions to LBAM funding could jeopardize federal funding

• An alternative regulatory approach may be needed to continue to provide protection to states and industry

• Never put into place
Common components

• Voluntary programs – states can choose to accept the harmonization requirements or develop different requirements, including quarantines or regulations, or take no action.

• Set minimum standards to provide continuity of requirements for shippers and regulatory staff.

• Only as good as the enforcement efforts of the states
Questions to consider in developing future harmonization plans

• Is regulation through a harmonization plan appropriate for the pest or pathway?

• Are more effective or appropriate tools available?

• Are mitigation steps available to reduce risk to acceptable levels and are they enforceable?

• What would the mechanism be for the development of the plan, periodic reviews?
Summary

Harmonization Plans are:

• Are a regulatory tool to provide a consistent framework for regulators and industry

• Voluntary

• Don’t replace or override other regulations or quarantines

• Need regular review