



## THE CENTRAL PLANT BOARD

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October 17, 2012

Rebecca Bech, Deputy Administrator  
USDA, APHIS, PPQ  
Washington DC

Dear Rebecca,

On behalf of the Central Plant Board I am writing to convey concerns the member states have experienced with the USDA APHIS Federal Order (FO) requiring pre-notification of interstate shipments of *Phytophthora ramorum* host nursery stock from regulated or quarantined counties. We recognize and appreciate that these advance notifications are intended to provide receiving states sufficient time to assign and prioritize resources, assure rapid response and provide direct traceability should at-risk plants be found to be infected with *P. ramorum*. Unfortunately, receiving states faced with potential introductions of infested material are limited by state statutory authorities and geographic boundaries. In addition, ever shrinking state resources, limited time during the busiest season of the year also impedes the ability of receiving states to ensure compliance with the FO. Due to these limitations, receiving states are dependent on USDA APHIS and origin state departments of agriculture to ensure shipping nurseries comply with the FO.

Receiving states have no ability to verify that all pre-notifications have been provided, they have no ability to respond to late or inadequate notification and they have limited ability to address process or procedural issues. Due to these concerns and limitations we are requesting that USDA APHIS consider a number of changes in how this pre-notification program is administered and implemented. Specifically we would ask that USDA APHIS:

- In cooperation with shipping state departments of agriculture, ensure that shipping nurseries are adequately trained and knowledgeable about the requirements of the FO
- Conduct random routine audits of shipping records to ensure proper pre-notification is occurring
- Develop an FO enforcement procedure and guidance for documenting violations

- Respond quickly to reported violations with effective and appropriate enforcement actions
- Provide recipient states with copies of compliance agreements with shipping nurseries
- Amend the FO to require that a system be developed that confirms or verifies that shipping nurseries have made appropriate contacts with receiving states.

Sincerely,



Philip Marshall, President  
Central Plant Board

CC: Bob Ehart, NASDA  
Mike Cooper, President National Plant Board  
Craig Regelbrugge, ANLA  
Vicki Smith, Eastern Plant Board President  
Christel Harden, Southern Plant Board President  
Donna Rise, Western Plant Board President