Export Certification Program

The USDA-APHIS-PPQ is responsible for administering the Export Certification Program, to facilitate the trade in U.S. plants and plant products, and ensure that these products being shipped from the U.S. meet the entry requirements of the receiving country. USDA has entered into cooperative relationships with individual states, through Memorandums of Understanding, to perform export certification duties, including inspections and issuance of certificates. This cooperative relationship has been beneficial to both regulatory parties and also the nation’s agricultural industries.

However, members of the Central Plant Board are concerned by significant discrepancies in the content of direction being provided to states by USDA, and in inconsistencies in how procedures and protocols are implemented by state and federal officials. Currently, responses to questions are often highly variable between Export Certification Specialists (ECS). The protocols and methods by which certification is determined also can be highly variable, between both state and federal Accredited Certifying Officials. These discrepancies and inconsistencies are confusing for state regulatory officials and exporters, create conflict between states, put exporters at a competitive disadvantage, and impede and disrupt trade.

Additionally, a review of the National Seed Health System (NSHS) was completed in 2010, yet no action appears to have been taken by USDA on the recommendations from that review. This review was a high priority for states, the findings and recommendations were significant, and implementation of these recommendations could lead to great improvements in the NSHS.

RESOLVED, by the Central Plant Board at its 89th annual meeting in Manhattan, Kansas, May 2, 2013, request USDA-APHIS-PPQ to implement training and coordination activities for the ECS’s, necessary to improve the accuracy and consistency of information being provided to states related to export certification.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NSHS program review recommendations be implemented as soon as practicable and the results reported at the 2014 National Plant Board Annual Meeting.

Distribution:

Kevin Shea, Administrator, USDA-APHIS
Osama El-Lissy, Deputy Administrator, USDA-APHIS-PPQ
Rebecca Bech, Field Operations Associate Deputy Administrator, USDA-APHIS-PPQ
Jeff Grode, Policy Management Associate Deputy Administrator, USDA-APHIS-PPQ
Paula Henstridge, Assistant Deputy Administrator, USDA-APHIS-PPQ
Alan Dowdy, Assistant Deputy Administrator, USDA-APHIS-PPQ
Jason Hancock, Deputy Chief of Staff, UPDA-APHIS-PPQ
Mike Watson, Executive Director, Plant Health Programs, USDA APHIS PPQ
Matt Royer, Executive Director, Field Operations
Christian Dellis, Export Services Deputy Director, USDA-APHIS-PPQ
Geir Friisoe, National Plant Board President
Carol Holko, Eastern Plant Board President
Mitch Yergert, Western Plant Board President
Mike Evans, Southern Plant Board President
Ric Dunkle, Senior Director, ASTA
David T. Buckingham, President, AASCO
Chet Boruff, CEO, AOSCA