



SOUTHERN PLANT BOARD

April 9-12, 2006

Savannah, Georgia

RESOLUTION No. 7

INCREASED INSPECTIONS AT PORTS OF ENTRY AND OFFSHORE PEST MITIGATION

Alabama

It has long been a recognized fact that U. S. ports of entry are the first line of protection for the nation's agricultural and environmental resources. In March of 2005, the U. S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report to Congress on the work Homeland Security is doing to protect agriculture from a terrorist attack. The GAO report noted that since the transfer of agricultural inspectors from USDA to DHS-Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in 2003, there have been fewer inspections of agricultural products at the nation's ports of entry.

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Although the main emphasis of the report was on agroterrorism, the main threat posed to plant resources was the inadvertent introduction of plant pests on plant products entering the U.S. in commercial freight shipments or in personal shipments that are hand-carried or mailed. This is evidenced by the recent establishment of citrus greening disease in Florida and detections of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 in geraniums from Central America, which are both on the select agent list.

Following the GAO report, DHS CBP indicated improvements would be made; however, this activity has never surfaced as a formal priority of the DHS even though these introductions impact the nation's food supply. In some areas of the country, such as in South Florida, local relationships between USDA-APHIS and DHS CBP have been very collaborative, but the quality of agricultural mission related activities nationally remains questionable.

In addition to improving pest exclusion at the ports, there is also a need to identify plant pest pathways to both close these pathways and to take measures to mitigate these pests at the offshore point of origin.

RESOLVED by the Southern Plant Board at its annual meeting held in Savannah, Georgia on April 12, 2006, that the DHS CBP make the inspection of agricultural products a formal priority and that they increase inspections of agricultural products entering the United States.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that USDA-APHIS direct resources to closing plant pest pathways and to implementing programs to mitigate plant pests at their offshore point of origin.

Motion to Adopt: Tomm Johnson

Seconded by: Richard Gaskella

Distribution:

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