

FOR INFORMATION
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SUBJECT: APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine Makes Organizational Changes within Its Plant Health Programs Unit

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine announces changes to the organizational structure of its Plant Health Programs (PHP) unit, effective March 15, 2009.

PHP has made tremendous progress and achieved many of its goals since its last reorganization more than four years ago, and now is the time to take advantage of new opportunities for further program improvements. In the interest of achieving cost-savings and increasing rule making efficiencies, PPQ has determined that reorganization of portions of PHP would be beneficial, specifically rotating five of the unit directors and eliminating one unit, redistributing those employees to two other units. The other most notable changes will be placing all regulatory policy and coordination and commodity permit functions within one unit and all scientific pest services and inspection stations in another unit, as well as creating a PPQ Planning and Program Analysis unit and an Accreditation and Certification branch.

The proposed PHP reorganization will go a long way in helping PHP accomplish several goals:

- APHIS is committed to succession planning, building and training APHIS leaders for the future. Rotating managers into new roles will provide excellent opportunities to cross train rising leaders and allow new ideas to flourish.
- Opportunities exist to further streamline the process for evaluating new plant and plant product imports; reorganizing the import specialists and regulatory coordinators into the same unit will enhance quality control and save time.
- The creation of an Accreditation and Certification branch will bring to the forefront some forward-thinking programs such as the National Clean Plant Network and the Fruit Tree and Ralstonia Certification programs.
- The reorganization of the pest permitting unit is an opportunity for PHP to further improve the permitting process, simplifying it for our stakeholders, yet still protecting American agriculture and the environment from pests.
- The elimination of a unit will also provide annual cost savings for APHIS.

Alan Green will remain in his current role as PHP Executive Director. The new Associate Executive Director for PHP will be Craig Fedchock.

The newly created Registration, Identification, Permitting, and Plant Safeguarding unit will be directed by Mike Firko. This staff will be composed of the following branches: Select Agents and APHIS Library (reporting directly to Mike Firko), as well as Plant Safeguarding (led by Gordon Muraoka), Germplasm Facility (led by Joe Foster), Pest Permitting (led by Shirley Wager-Page),

National Identification Services (led by Joe Cavey), Molecular Diagnostics Lab (led by Mary Palm), and Offshore Pest Information Program (led by Parul Patel).

Also newly organized, the Regulations, Permits, and Manuals unit will be directed by Matt Rhoads. This will be composed of the following branches: Plant and Plant Product Permits (led by Joe Corpuz); Risk Management and Plants for Planting Policy (led by Alex Belano); Regulatory Coordination and Compliance (led by Laura Lewandowski); and Manuals (led by Bud Petit de Mange).

The new Phytosanitary Issues Management (PIM) unit Director will be Dr. Murali Bandla; PIM's structure and function will remain unchanged.

The Quarantine Policy, Analysis and Support (QPAS) unit Director will be William Thomas; QPAS' structure and function will remain unchanged, with the exception of the addition of an Accreditation and Certification branch (led by Sam Johnson).

A PPQ Planning and Program Analysis unit will report directly to the Executive Director's office.

PHP's Veterinary Regulatory Support (VRS) staff (Director Dr. Maurine Bell) and Information Technology Development and Coordination staff (Director Dan Stoltz) will remain unchanged.

The new PHP organizational charts will be posted on the PPQ web site. PHP does not anticipate any disruptions in service to our stakeholders or to the safeguarding mission.

/s/ Rebecca Bech

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