



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Washington, DC
20250

Mr. Stephen D'Esposito
President
RESOLVE
1255 23rd Street NW, Ste 275
Washington, DC 20037

DEC 06 2011

Dear Mr. D'Esposito:

Subject: Funding for Methods Development Programs at the Center for Plant Health Science and Technology

Thank you for writing to me to describe your concerns regarding funding for methods development programs at the Center for Plant Health Science and Technology (CPHST). I appreciate your alerting me to the programs that you value.

Right now, APHIS is under significant budget pressures, and we anticipate budget reductions in fiscal years (FY) 2012 and 2013. Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) has not yet received its 2012 budget allocation, so we have not decided allocations for specific methods development projects. We do, however, have ongoing activities in the project areas you named in your letter, and I would like to take this opportunity to describe our work and short-term plans in those areas:

1. Efficacy studies for the treatments for wood packaging authorized by the International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures No.15 (ISPM 15);
2. Technical assistance to improve the management of goldspotted oak borer and walnut twig beetle; and
3. Studies to identify, test, and develop rearing techniques for biological control agents.

ISPM 15

PPQ has several projects under way related to evaluating the efficacy of the heat and methyl bromide treatments in ISPM 15. These projects include the development of improved monitoring systems for both treatments and the validation of the efficacy of these treatments for specific tree species and insect pests. We are also evaluating additional treatments for wood packaging and other wood products, including the use of alternative fumigants, alternative heating methods, and irradiation. PPQ is collaborating with the Agricultural Research Service, universities, and international groups on wood quarantine treatment development and efficacy studies.

Goldspotted Oak Borer and Walnut Twig Beetle

Even though the walnut twig beetle, the associated thousand cankers disease, and goldspotted oak borer are not federal quarantine pests, PPQ recognizes the severe effects they could have on forests and residential areas. Therefore, PPQ is collaborating with



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scientists in the United States and other countries to develop chemical attractants and effective trap designs to be used in survey programs related to these and several other wood boring pests. In addition, we are determining the efficacy of heat and fumigation treatments for walnut twig beetle and thousand cankers disease in wood products and logs.

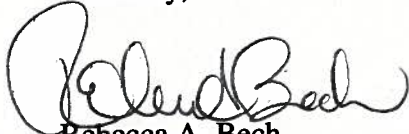
Biological Control

PPQ appreciates the role of biological control programs in the long-term management of a number of introduced pests, especially considering biocontrol may be the only viable tool available in many cases. PPQ is coordinating numerous projects with federal, state, and university partners to identify new biocontrol agents and to develop and test biocontrol technologies. We are also continuing to improve methods for existing biocontrol programs such as the emerald ash borer program. CPHST is also building capacity in insect rearing technology and has engaged the external scientific rearing community in this effort. A notable recent infrastructure investment is the development of mobile insect quarantine and rearing modular units in California; these units can be quickly outfitted to support new program operations.

Although federal budget reductions might require PPQ to modify some of its programs, we will continue to leverage our resources and partner with others to address important pest issues. For example, we have used Farm Bill Section 10201 funding to support several collaborative projects in all three of these areas; we plan to continue using this funding in FY 2012.

I hope this letter clarifies PPQ's efforts in the areas that appear to concern you most. I also hope you will feel free to call or write should you wish to discuss these or any other issues in more detail.

Sincerely,



Rebecca A. Bech
Deputy Administrator
Plant Protection and Quarantine

jsn/jmh

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