



# EASTERN PLANT BOARD

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## 2006 Resolution No. 5 Addressing Diagnostic and Taxonomic Support for CAPS

Recent enhancements in the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program, in response to the terrorist events of September 11 and the Safeguarding Review, have substantially improved pest survey and detection activities at the state and regional level. However, the tremendous increase in samples generated from pest surveillance activities and their screening requirements leading to diagnostic and/or taxonomic confirmation has resulted in a significant delay in obtaining timely diagnostic/taxonomic determinations necessary to trigger rapid response. The significant increase in the volume of samples and corresponding target pest diversity have identified the need for personnel dedicated to screening samples, regional and national coordination of survey programs to direct states, the identification of qualified taxonomic and diagnostic sources in the private sector and the creation of identifier positions to serve the states and APHIS.

The CAPS Program is soliciting information from State Survey Coordinators to identify those surveys requiring taxonomic support, the estimated number of samples inclusive of average size in order to assess screening, diagnostic and taxonomic support requirements across the nation.

Screening, diagnostic and taxonomic support are critical in achieving the objective of early pest detection of invasive plant pests and in the initiation of a rapid response to mitigate their impact and in securing any chance of eradication of the pest.

**Resolved:** By the Eastern Plant Board at its 81<sup>st</sup> annual meeting in Rehoboth Beach, DE, on April 6, 2006, to request that the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) collaborate with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to obtain the funding necessary to implement the recommendations contained within the report, *Safeguarding American Plant Resources* (1999):

1. Dedicate a National Identification System (NIS) staff position to coordinate taxonomic support to domestic programs, with the task of establishing a virtual lab linking existing NIS diagnostic resources with available expertise outside of HIS for domestic study.
2. Augment the National Identification Services (NIS) diagnostic system to provide a "virtual" clearinghouse for specimens to be identified;

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3. Contract with external specialists through cooperative agreements to provide their services in confirming identification of species that are not readily categorized by National Invasive Plant Pest Laboratory staff;
4. Make substantial use of highly competent taxonomists and systematists in a variety of institutions.

**Distribution:**

Dr. Craig Lambert, Acting Under Secretary, USDA

Dr. Ron DeHaven, Administrator, USDA-APHIS

Dr. Richard Dunkle, Deputy Administrator, USDA-APHIS-PPQ

Rick Kirchhoff, CEO, NASDA

Gus Douglass, NASDA Animal and Plant Industries Committee

Bob Ehart, NASDA

Ken Rauscher, National Plant Board President

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