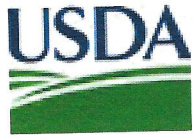




Strategic Alliance



Framework

An agreement between the National Plant Board (NPB), Board of Directors (BOD) and the Plant Protection and Quarantine Management Team (PPQMT)

June 2019

Introduction

In June 2014, leadership from PPQ and the NPB met to discuss the longstanding partnership between the two organizations, shared priorities, and the benefits of a collaborative approach. Through discussion, we recognized that our partnership is a strategic alliance with a continuum of engagement from basic information sharing, to coordination of complementary activities, to full collaboration with totally integrated plant health safeguarding efforts.

Our respective authorities and capacities result in varying levels of interdependence on different plant health issues. Through effective communication we build better understanding of the needs and issues that exist locally, gain more perspective on local stakeholder needs, and identify the regional and national context and political landscape in which those needs and issues can be addressed. In this context, we may work together at these organizational levels:

- the individual state level between the State Plant Regulatory Official and the State Plant Health Director,
- the regional level between the Regional Plant Board leadership and Field Operations leadership
- the national level between the leadership of the National Plant Board and Plant Protection and Quarantine

Diversity in plant health risks requires that the coordination of efforts across organizational levels is flexible in order to respond to each unique situation. It is important that we clearly communicate about the level of integration on each issue or project to determine the appropriate role for each partner organization. In addition, we will consider the level of participation and informational needs of other stakeholders like the public, industry, tribes, universities/extension services, and non-profit organizations.

As a result of the June 2014 discussions, the PPQ Management Team and the NPB Board of Directors decided to formalize a strategic alliance for the mutual benefit of both organizations. The agreements outlined in this document are between the NPB BOD and the PPQ MT and reflect the organizational commitment to communication, collaboration, and coordination. The agreements outlined in this document do not change the relationship that exists between PPQ and individual states or regions or supersede any local agreements.

Shared Purpose

PPQ and NPB work together to use federal and state authorities, assets, and expertise to safeguard plant health and enable safe trade.

The Importance of the Alliance:

The alliance between PPQ and the NPB builds upon the authorities, assets and expertise of both organizations to safeguard plant health and enable safe trade. The states require PPQ for:

- International trade agreements
- Creating the national regulatory framework for interstate and international issues/commerce
- Management of the federal export certification program
- Obtaining the national perspective/input of industries and other national organizations
- Technical and scientific expertise
- Funding
- Emergency response
- Relationships with other Federal agencies such as Customs and Border Protection, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of the Interior.

Likewise, PPQ requires the states for:

- Local knowledge and relationships with industry, other units of state and local government, and other stakeholders
- Consensus building among the states
- Perspective across the states/regions
- Exercise State authority
- Emergency response
- Resources to conduct local operations
- Technical and scientific expertise

Nature of the Relationship

PPQ and the NPB have a strong working relationship with common goals on issues with national and international impact characterized by:

- a desire for a true alliance/partnership in which the organizations work side-by-side and engage early on issues of mutual importance
- a consultative relationship with a commitment to communication and resolution of issues
- a willingness to use each other's strengths
- support from affected stakeholders

Communication/Information Sharing

In many cases, we reach consensus on how to best manage issues of national scope and

importance. In cases where we do not reach consensus, we aspire to understand, accept, and articulate our differences clearly and constructively. Even when we do not reach consensus, we can be united and clear in communicating our differing perspectives and our respective roles. Regardless of the outcome of our discussions, effective and proactive communication is essential to the success of the strategic alliance. We agree that optimal communication is:

- specific, proactive, and timely
- clear in articulating expectations, realities, and limitations
- focused on producing alignment and results when circumstances support a collaborative response
- consistent with agreed-upon protocols within and among organizations
- unified in messaging to each organization about agreements, decisions, and areas of disagreement

To sustain optimal communication, we believe that:

- there is an ongoing need to train NPB and PPQ staff to ensure the importance of the alliance is understood
- we sometimes need a broader understanding of decisions and agreements within each organization
- sometimes issues should be elevated appropriately and transparently within an organization

Decision Making

We agree that effective decision making involves several steps and should have a mechanism for each party to address concerns about any aspect of the process. A robust decision model includes:

- Identify the trigger—what precipitates the need for a decision
- Identify the specific issue—the scope of the issue, the response, the authorities, and the impacted stakeholders
- Identify and analyze the available options and stakeholder input
- Make a decision—develop a response, including a communication plan
- Implement the response- identify timeframes, performance metrics, a monitoring plan, roles and responsibilities, and barriers to success
- Monitor and review outcomes -were objectives met, was the solution responsive to needs/concerns, were there unintended impacts, was there compliance, is a new or improved process indicated by new or changing information

Within the context of a decision model, we agree on the following fundamentals:

- When decisions affect both PPQ and States it is important to engage people in both organizations early. Decision making and planning necessitate regular outreach at

regular intervals. Outreach includes:

- Information sharing
- Stakeholder meetings
- Consultations
- Communication regarding pending issues including upcoming decisions about budget, policy and programs
- Not all members of an organization can be involved in every decision. When decisions impact both PPQ and the States, every effort is made to include both organizations in discussions.
- Once decisions are made and communicated, the PPQ MT and the NPB BOD make every effort to ensure that decisions are carried out, recognizing the NPB's limitations in influencing state members.
- When either party is concerned about any part of the process, the issue is discussed between PPQ and the NPB. Every effort is made to resolve the issue and prevent similar issues in the future.
- When agreement cannot be reached and either PPQ or the NPB believes an issue should be elevated, each party should have the opportunity to make their respective leadership chains aware (NASDA and USDA).

Evaluation and Metrics

PPQ MT and the NPB BOD agree to assess this alliance at least annually and to use that opportunity to assess progress on identified strategic priorities, as well as to identify new strategic priorities that require a joint effort. The PPQ MT and the NPB BOD conduct the annual assessment based on the metrics outlined in work plans for strategic priorities. The PPQ MT and the NPB BOD agree to discontinue projects that are completed or no longer relevant.

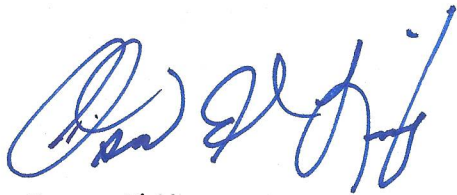
Even though we review the alliance annually, it is important to maintain open lines of communication and address opportunities, issues, and grievances with each partner as soon as possible.

Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) safeguards U.S. agriculture and natural resources against the entry, establishment, and spread of economically and environmentally significant pests, and facilitates the safe international trade of agricultural products. PPQ's commitment is to ensure healthy plants and safe trade for a strong and prosperous America.

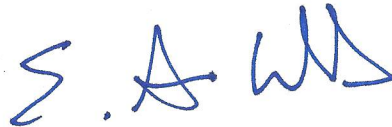
The National Plant Board (NPB) provides national representation for each of the regional plant boards; fosters effective and harmonized plant health programs; acts as an information clearinghouse on plant pest prevention and regulatory matters; provides for a discussion of principles, policies and methods; and promotes efficiency, harmony and uniformity in and among the states in the field of plant pest prevention and regulation.

Together, **PPQ and the NPB** agree to work together to utilize our respective federal and state authorities, assets, and expertise to safeguard plant health and enable safe trade.

Signed:



Osama El-Lissy
PPQ Deputy Administrator



Ann Gibbs
President, National Plant Board

Signature Date

Signature Date



John Caravetta
Vice President, National Plant Board

Signature Date