



## National CAPS Committee (NCC) Conference Call

May 14, 2015

Minutes

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### Participants

John Bowers	Joe Collins	Lisa Jackson
Brian Kopper	Brad Lewis	Talitha Molet
Rick Zink	Yolisa Ishibashi	Melinda Sullivan
Terry Bourgoin	Carol Motloch	Dan Mackesy
Kristian Rondeau	Saul Vaiciunas	Kathy Handy
Piera Siegert	Dale Anderson	Eileen Luke

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### CAPS Reporting

The CAPS Program is working with the folks at Purdue University to develop and implement reporting functionality that will make available 24/7 on the CAPS R&C site up-to-date measures on the performance of the program (in lieu of an annual report). To do this, the information in the Survey Summary Form has to be current and match what is in the Field Operations (FO) spending plan for CAPS agreements. Any changes in activities from what was planned and entered into the Survey Summary Form, through the development of cooperative agreements, and throughout the survey season till the development of an Accomplishment Report, need to be updated. To accomplish this, a change request process will be developed for any changes to the survey name, target pests, and funding level of Infrastructure and Surveys. A formal process also will allow us to document changes in case discrepancies arise at a later date.

The question as to the best way to make the changes was put to the NCC; Is it better for the Program to make the changes or pass the Survey Summary Form back to the states to make the changes? The NCC seemed comfortable either way, but noted that a courtesy email should be sent to the state notifying them that a change had been made. Checks and balances are important to make sure everyone is on the same page.

A corollary issue was identified when attempting to match survey names in the Survey Summary Form with survey names listed on submitted work plans that become part of the FO spending plan. Sometimes these did not match. **States are strongly encouraged to use the same name for their work plans as in the Survey Summary Form.** Survey names help match up funding and are used for reporting purposes. If a survey name is not available in the Survey Summary Form (e.g., Warehouse Survey), please contact John and Brian (cc Susan) and we will attempt to resolve the issue. Remember that survey names can be more generic for 2016 (e.g., Orchard Survey) because fields will be added to the 2016 Survey Summary Form to indicate in what commodities, environments, and/or habitats the survey will occur. Until the formal process goes live, please direct all requests to Brian for consideration.

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Note: A reminder to the NCC, please distribute CAPS updates, conference-call minutes, and other CAPS-related information to the constituency that you represent in a timely manner. Also, please bring their items, issues, concerns, and opinions back to the NCC for discussion. It is our responsibility that everyone is kept engaged in the CAPS program.



## **2016 Guidelines**

The NCC was asked if there was any feedback regarding the 2016 Guidelines with regard to format, new work plans, etc. NCC members have not heard any comments from their constituency as yet. If anyone has a question concerning the Guidelines, please do not hesitate to ask.

## **Funding Request**

An updated funding request to support exports was submitted by PPQ through channels for inclusion in the President's FY 2017 budget. Supporting and increasing exports is a major initiative of the Administration. The request included, in part, an increase for Pest Detection for analytical support and increased surveys through cooperative agreements. Any increase Pest Detection receives likely will be used to support the early detection mission as well. It will take a couple of years to sort out the surveys that will/can support exports if the funding increase is approved. The President's FY17 budget will be released around February 2016.

## **Recording of Calls and Webinars**

A question arose in PPQ about participating in conference calls that are hosted by non-APHIS people (e.g., industry members) and that are audio recorded. APHIS' LPA gave the following guidance. This guidance also may be useful for state employees, but please make sure to contact your own public relations staff for details specific to your state.

With technology these days, it's very easy to record calls and Webinars so this will be happening more and more often. The people recording the calls should make that clear at the start of conversations. Any media on such calls should also be identified up front. We record some APHIS calls in fact, but we're very clear to the audience that they're being recorded. APHIS employees can always feel free to ask beforehand whether industry calls are being recorded.

In all interactions with outside stakeholders, it is best to consider these as if they were "media" calls and speak as if your words could show up in print. Stick to the facts, stay in your lane, don't be afraid to say if you don't have the information requested ready at hand. Don't speculate, don't provide insider information (information not ready to be released publically), speak for the agency and not your own opinions. Any red flags that APHIS participants discern on such calls can be shared with Abby Yigzaw as potential media issues or their supervisor as potential policy issues. Keep in mind that you can decline answering particular questions on the call if you don't feel comfortable answering under those circumstances or don't fully know the answer to questions off of the top of your head. Keep in mind that anything you say is publishable. Anything you say can potentially be recorded and replayed. Even if it's a conference call that isn't being recorded, one participant can potentially decide to record the call for their own purposes. If anything outlandish is said on that call, it can potentially become a headline. If you're helping out a particular stakeholder or set of stakeholders for a specific commodity and



need to share info before that info becomes publically available info (or some sort of similar situation), err on the side of caution when it comes to sharing that info on a larger stakeholder conference call and consider sharing info one-on-one with one trusted stakeholder POC.

As you find out more information about which stakeholders are recording calls and if they are or are not stating it up front it would be appreciated if you would give LPA a heads up.

The NCC conference call has never, nor ever will be, recorded. Others also should not record the call for any purpose. We publish an extensive minutes of the call so that information, decisions, and the thinking and explanations behind the decisions are communicated to the CAPS community clearly. We need to be able to speak freely and openly on the call secure in the knowledge that what we say will be held in confidence as necessary. Not everything we talk about on the call always makes it into the minutes to the call. Please contact John if you ever have any questions or concerns on how the NCC call is conducted. Also refer to the NCC Bylaws.

### **Climate Modelling Initiative**

Gericke Cook in the CPHST Ft. Collins Laboratory is leading an effort to develop climate models, degree-day maps, etc. as one initiative to update and improve on what was once NAPPFAST. To begin this effort, Gericke and the PDMT are looking for individuals that have experience using such products or others that want/need to use these products for planning and developing surveys. An initial call is scheduled for Monday, May 18, at 2:00 pm eastern time, to begin the discussion with Gericke as to the direction the initiative will take. If you know of someone who can help in this endeavor, please contact John. The commitment will be minimal to provide the initial direction.

### **CPHST Staffing Changes**

- Talitha Molet is leaving CPHST for a position with APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) in Raleigh. She starts that position on June 15. Talitha has done some wonderful work in support of the CAPS Program and we will miss her. Rick is in conversations regarding filling her position, but this will take a while.
- Melinda Sullivan will be going on a TDY in Field Operations in Ft. Collins for 90 days beginning next week.

The CPHST CAPS core team will be reduced from 4 to 2 over the next few months. Please be patient as we work through this staff shortage and priority adjustments.



### **Farm Bill**

- FY15 agreements are being obligated, and for the most part, everything is going well.
- The first Team Leads call for FY16 was held last week. Team Leads will begin reaching out for volunteers for review team participation.
- Team Leads also will begin reviewing the Farm Bill Guidelines and updating them for 2016. If anyone has any comments regarding Goal 1 Survey guidance, please direct them to John and Brian.
- Farm Bill will use Metastorm for another year.
- An open period for suggestions starting in July or early August is anticipated for better alignment with CAPS.
- With an earlier start to the Farm Bill cycle, some questions have arisen regarding whether the agreements staff can handle the additional Farm Bill agreements on top of PPQ's other agreements that are normally processed during the latter part of the year.
- **Also, would states prefer that there be less or more separation between CAPS and Farm Bill agreements? Does the current timing work, or would states prefer to get CAPS and Farm Bill money in close proximity? Feedback to Kristian (cc John and Brian) is requested.**

### **National CAPS Meeting**

It is hoped that the documents for final approval of the meeting will be ready soon. Melonie Torillo was called away with her Incidence Management Team to Puerto Rico and was unable to complete the required cost analyses while on site. Melonie will be back in the office next week, and we will submit the documents as soon as possible.

**The next NCC call will be held on Thursday, June 4, 2015, at 1:00 pm eastern time.**

Please forward to your NCC representative any agenda topics for discussion on the next NCC call.