The Pest Detection Program supports APHIS’ goal of safeguarding U.S. agricultural and environmental resources by ensuring that new introductions of harmful plant pests and diseases are detected as soon as possible, before they have a chance to cause significant damage. The program uses a multi-pronged strategy to accomplish its mission, involving a structured, transparent assessment process to identify pest threats, the development of scientifically sound pest diagnostics and survey protocols, conducting the actual pest surveys, and the timely reporting of pest survey results through the National Agricultural Pest Information System (NAPIS). These efforts are accomplished by involving stakeholders and the scientific community, and leveraging efforts by other Agencies in USDA, government entities, State departments of agriculture, universities, and industry partners. The Agency and its State cooperators carry out surveys for high-risk pests through the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program, which is funded through the Pest Detection line item. The Pest Detection Program also leverages funding through the Farm Bill Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program, Goal 1 Survey, to accomplish its goals.

The National Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Committee (NCC) meets annually to discuss the performance of the Pest Detection/CAPS program, and to discuss and update the CAPS National Survey Guidelines. The NCC also will discuss the implementation of any changes that may be needed to the Program and Guidelines based on issues raised during the previous survey year as a result of discussions with the various representatives’ constituency. The annual meeting provides a forum to obtain input on the direction of the CAPS Program from those in the field, is an avenue to inform the States of new initiatives and survey and data guidelines, and is a means to alert our state cooperators of any plant pest threats and PPQ policy direction that may be on the horizon. The annual meeting also provides a forum for discussions among PPQ and State personnel and the Farm Bill Program that may well lead to major changes in the CAPS and Farm Bill Program’s business models.

The meeting will be co-hosted by the PPQ Center for Plant Health Science & Technology (CPHST) Phoenix Laboratory and the PPQ Arizona State Plant Health Director (SPHD), and held at the offices of the Arizona SPHD, 3640 E. Wier Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85040, Phone: (602) 431-3201, Fax: (602) 414-9870.

The meeting will start at 8:00 am and go until 5:00 pm each day, Tuesday and Wednesday, February 2 and 3, 2016. Suggested travel days are Monday, February 1 and Thursday, February 4, 2015. The local airport is [Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport](http://skyharbor.com/) (PHX).

A block of rooms has been reserved at the [Holiday Inn Express & Suites Tempe](http://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/tempe/phxwb/hoteldetail), 1520 West Baseline Road, Tempe,  Arizona 85283, at the federal per diem rate. Rooms can be reserved by calling the Holiday Inn Express at (480) 831-9800 and referencing the group name “USDA APHIS PPQ PHP.” The block will be held until January 11, 2016. As usual, folks will need to call in and make the reservation with their own credit card.

The hotel is located 4-5 miles from the meeting location (11-12 minutes w/o traffic) next to the large Arizona Mills Mall, and just 12 miles from downtown Phoenix. GOVs will be available for transportation to the meeting location.

The hotel is about six miles from the Phoenix airport. Information on taxis and shuttles can be found on the [Phoenix Airport Taxis and Shuttle Services](https://skyharbor.com/ParkingTransportation/TaxisAndShuttles) page. The hotel does not have a van. Taxis are approximately $20 from airport to hotel (cost can be split). Super Shuttle is about $15 per person.

Please contact Karla Kekela, Administrative Officer at (602) 414-3902 or by email at [Karla.K.Kekela@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Karla.K.Kekela@aphis.usda.gov) if you have any questions.

Travel expenses for state employees will be reimbursed through the National Plant Board. Contact Aurelio Posadas for information at (916) 709-3484, or via email at [aureliop@elkgrove.net](mailto:aureliop@elkgrove.net).

Lunch plans are yet to be determined. Plan to bring cash for lunch in case we order in.