



Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection  
Service

Plant Protection and  
Quarantine

Plant Health  
Programs

Pest Detection &  
Emergency  
Programs

4700 River Road  
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**DATE:** December 11, 2017

**FROM:** John H. Bowers, PhD  
National Policy Manager – Pest Detection  
Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JHB", is written over the name "John H. Bowers" in the "FROM:" line.

**SUBJECT:** Justification for the NCC Meeting in Newnan, Georgia

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 mission of the Pest Detection/CAPS program is to provide a survey profile of plant pests in the United States deemed to be of regulatory significance to USDA-APHIS-PPQ and our cooperators by confirming the presence or absence of plant pests impacting the domestic and international movement of plants and plant products; and establishing and maintaining a comprehensive network of cooperators and stakeholders to facilitate our mission and to safeguard our American plant resources.

The National Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Committee (NCC), consisting of both APHIS and State representatives, meets annually to review and 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, the Farm Bill Program, and PPQ National Identification Services that may lead to changes in the CAPS and Farm Bill Program's business models. The results of this meeting will have important and wide implications.

This meeting will develop recommendations, prioritize, and institute action items with milestones and deadlines. Discussion of these items will begin before the meeting, and relevant material distributed in advance. A 2-day, face-to-face meeting with discussion is needed to prioritize, assign responsibilities, and continue to move the CAPS and Farm Bill Programs forward.

The meeting will be held at the PPQ National Detector Dog Training Center (NDDTC) in Newnan, Georgia. Meeting dates are February 7 – 8, 2018, with travel on February 6 and 9, 2018. There will be 24 attendees, 14 of which are APHIS employees and eight non-APHIS, State Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources attendees (listed below). The State attendees will be reimbursed through the PPQ-National Plant Board (NPB) Safeguarding Agreement as in past years. Additionally, representatives from Purdue University will attend the meeting.

If you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at [John.Bowers@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:John.Bowers@aphis.usda.gov).

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