

# Memorandum of Understanding

Between

National Plant Board

and

National Plant Diagnostic Network

## Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets the terms of an agreement between the *National Plant Board* (NPB) and the *National Plant Diagnostic Network* (NPDN) to create a stronger relationship between the two organizations. The result of this is an improved line of communication and rapid response to the detection of high impact plant pests.

## Background

The NPDN was established in 2002 by the USDA-CSREES (now USDA-NIFA) to address plant biosecurity. The network of labs and diagnostic personnel that comprise the NPDN was built upon the existing land-grant university systems. The network has matured, the member labs are no longer limited to land-grant university institutions, and now include private (industry) and state department of agriculture laboratories. See Appendix II for the NPDN Charter, which documents the network's roles and responsibilities. Extensive information about the goals and outreach of the network can be found at [www.npdn.org](http://www.npdn.org).

The NPB, established in 1925, is a non-profit organization of the plant pest regulatory agencies of each state, Guam, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The purpose of the NPB is to:

- provide national representation for the regional plant boards;
- foster efficient, effective and harmonized plant health programs, including disseminating information on and providing a forum for discussion of policies, methods, and principles, and making recommendations to the regional boards on plant pest prevention and regulation issues;
- collaborate and communicate effectively with public and private agencies and organizations on plant health and plant pest regulatory issues.

- Protect agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and the environment on state, national and international levels.

Membership of the NPB is made up of the principal plant pest regulatory officials of each member commonwealth and state. This person is usually the administrator of the section of his or her state's Department of Agriculture which deals with pest prevention. Such units usually carry titles such as Plant Industry, Plant Health, Entomologist, State Plant Pathologist, etc. In some states the function is in an agency other than the department of agriculture. See Appendix III for NPB Scope and Responsibilities.

The scope of this MOU is confined to defining the contacts and diagnostic responsibilities within the NPDN-regulatory partner relationship. The NPDN and NPB members work in concert to safeguard plant health. However, over the nearly two decades of the NPDN's existence, turnover in staff, new technology, and the changing pest landscape have diminished the connections between these agencies, necessitating this MOU to define and refine the relationship.

### **Mutual Responsibilities**

1. Support and foster the relationships between NPDN members and NPB regulatory partners, to achieve open communication and transparency in areas of shared interest and goals. To foster this relationship, NPB representatives will join the quarterly meeting of the NPDN Advisory Committee, and NPDN will provide an update at the annual NPB Annual and/or Regional meetings.
2. Educate NPDN and NPB members regarding communication protocols and the roles of each in plant biosecurity. To ensure that this objective is met:
  - a. NPDN and NPB will make this MOU and its appendices available to their memberships to ensure awareness of each other's scope and responsibilities.
  - b. At least one exercise will take place annually between the NPB and NPDN, simulating a regulatory event or events using NPDN's existing scenario platform. Participants and scope of the exercise will be agreed upon jointly by NPDN and NPB leadership.

3. Educate NPDN and NPB members on issues related to data access, confidentiality, and definitions. To achieve this objective, NPDN and NPB will work collaboratively to develop and maintain the Data and Repository Use MOU.

### **Duration**

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by the mutual consent of authorized officials from the NPDN and the NPB. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by the authorized officials from the NPDN and the NPB and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by either of the partners, or by mutual consent. This MOU shall be reviewed every three years or as needed during joint activities.

### **MOU Signatories & Contact Information**

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## **Appendix I**

### Definitions

MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NPB	National Plant Board
NPDN	National Plant Diagnostic Network
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
CSREES	Cooperative State Research, Education and Service
NIFA	National Institute of Food and Agriculture

## Appendix II



### *National Plant Diagnostic Network*

## Governance Charter

*To ensure efficient function, establish mechanisms for decision making,  
and to provide for the orderly transfer of leadership*

*Last Updated: June 2, 2021*

*Version 2.0*

## **Appendix III**

### **National Plant Board – Scope & Responsibilities**

#### **The National Plant Board**

The National Plant Board (NPB) is an organization composed of state plant regulatory officials working to help protect agriculture, and the environment from the harm that serious plant pests could cause. The work of the NPB is accomplished in collaboration with NPB members: a regional plant board system composed of the Central, Eastern, Southern, and Western Plant Boards, federal and state agencies, and industry organizations.

#### **Mission/Vision Statement**

*Provide leadership in developing and implementing science-based regulatory policies and plant health programs, enable safeguarded trade, and protect the agricultural and natural resources of the United States.*

#### **Structure**

##### **Membership**

The membership of the National Plant Board shall include only United States of America official State, Commonwealth or territory plant regulatory agencies that are members in good standing with their regional plant boards or chapters or such other entities or groups as shall be approved by the Board of Directors. Each member is usually the administrator of the section of his or her state's Department of Agriculture which deals with pest prevention. Such units usually carry titles such as Plant Industry, Plant Health, Entomologist, State Plant Pathologist, etc. In some states the function is in an agency other than the department of agriculture

Member agencies are not limited in the number of attendees at National Plant Board meetings or participants on National Plant Board committees. A single representative from each State, Commonwealth or territory is the voting unit unless otherwise provided.

##### **Governance**

###### **Officers**

The officers of the National Plant Board shall consist of a president, vice-president, and a secretary-treasurer elected annually for a maximum of two years, or until their successors are elected and qualified. The Past-president serves in an advisory capacity to the NPB Officers, Executive Committee, the Board of Directors and NPB membership. The officers shall perform the duties usually performed by such officers, together with such duties as shall be prescribed by the Articles of Incorporation and bylaws, or the Board of Directors. All officers shall, on expiration of their terms, surrender to their successors all National Plant Board property.

## **NPB Board of Directors**

The management, control and operation of the affairs and properties of the NPB are vested in the Board of Directors of the NPB.

The Board of Directors shall establish policy and direct the official business of the National Plant Board. In addition, the Board of Directors shall function as a liaison between the National Plant Board and the regional plant boards, agencies of the federal government, and other appropriate stakeholder organizations.

The Board of Directors of the National Plant Board shall be a twelve (12) member body composed of the president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer, immediate past president, presidents, and vice-presidents of the regional plant boards. All members of the Board of Directors shall be representatives of official state, commonwealth or territory plant regulatory agencies that are members of the National Plant Board. Only one representative per official member agency of the National Plant Board may serve as a member of the Board of Directors.

## **Committees**

The NPB has a number of standing committees, and collaborates with USDA on others. Committees are created as needed to address specific plant pest issues. The NPB President is responsible for naming individuals to NPB committees, often with the input of regional presidents.

NPB members or designees are actively involved in various committees and working groups. This often includes collaboration with partners including USDA APHIS PPQ and the US Forest Service. Partnership with other organizations are formed as necessary.

The goals of these committees/working groups are wide ranging and may include the following:

- Prevention of new plant pests and diseases entering the U.S.
- Slow the movement of established pests within the U.S.
- Improve communication
- Streamline processes
- Attend to the affairs of the NPB

## **NPB Strategic Plan**

The NPB Strategic Plan guides the activities and priorities of the NPB. The most current version was developed and finalized in 2018.

### **Values that inform the strategic plan:**

- **Achievement** – Accomplish and promote the identified goals and objectives of the National Plant Board.
- **Communication** – Provide for an open and timely exchange of information and ideas among all interested and affected parties.
- **Credibility** – Maintain the NPB as an accountable and trustworthy organization.

- **Equality & Fairness** – Ensure just and impartial decision making to provide equal opportunity and unbiased treatment of all NPB members.
- **Knowledge** – Develop, acquire, and effectively use sound science-based information while employing innovative strategies and modern technologies.
- **Leadership** – Provide clear direction, guidance and support.
- **Teamwork** – Accomplish tasks through member cooperation and effective partnership.

**Goal 1: Provide a national forum to identify or respond to plant pest regulatory issues, solicit input, share information, and develop solutions.**

**Short term:** Collect input from NPB members regionally and nationally on what they see as the most pressing plant pest, regulations, imports/exports, and quarantine issues.

**Long term:**

- Communicate and collaborate with agencies and organizations concerning identified issues.
- Through collaboration provide solutions to identified issues.
- Evaluate identified issues and develop responses and solutions to preempt future issues.
- Regional officers will regularly engage their members to solicit input.

**Goal 2: Build partnerships and promote effective communication and collaboration between the NPB and:**

- USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service;
- USDA Forest Service (USFS);
- US Customs and Border Protection (CBP);
- National Association State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA);
- National Association of State Foresters (NASF);
- North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO);
- National Plant Diagnostic Clinic (NPDN);
- Other federal, state, and local governments and organizations and stakeholders as needed.

**Short Term:** Build partnerships between the national and regional plant boards and the organizations listed above. Invite partner organizations to annual meetings and include them on agendas as appropriate. Inform appropriate partners of state plant pest issues in a timely manner.

**Long Term:** Communicate with partners to maintain relationships and further mutual goals. Communicate the NPB's position on issues, actions taken, and results and make them publicly available.



**Goal 3: Provide technical support to NPB members and partners on plant pest regulatory programs.**

**Short-Term Goals:**

- Solicit and identify training needs of members and their staff on regulatory plant pest issues and regulatory practices.

**Long-Term Goals:**

- Facilitate training needs by working with partners including APHIS PPQ, APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services, PPQ Professional Development Center and others.
- Share timely information on new or emerging plant pests, identification, or diagnostic tools, and/or control strategies with members.
- Share information and provide technical guidance on state plant regulatory issues and concerns with NASDA.
- Participate on steering committees, task forces and ad hoc workgroups at the national, regional, and local level to provide technical information on states' interests and policies.

**Goal 4: Safeguard and protect U.S. agricultural and natural resources, to facilitate the interstate and international trade of plants and plant products.**

**Short-Term Goals:**

- Foster strong relationships with states with similar exports and concerns regarding safeguarding US agriculture and facilitating trade.

**Long-Term Goals:**

- Contribute to the dialogue with NAPPO and APHIS PPQ to facilitate safeguarded international trade.
- Work with APHIS PPQ to ensure consistent phytosanitary certification and training practices.