



Official Notification of Plant Pest Identifications to State Departments of Agriculture

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Introduction

Timely notification of new plant pest*, disease, or noxious weed identifications is critical for effective response planning, execution, and communications. Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) is responsible for the official confirmation of pest identifications and ensuring the timely and secured communication of notification results to internal and external entities. PPQ distributes these notifications in accordance with PPQ's *Protocol for Simultaneous Communication with State Plant Health Directors (SPHD) and State Plant Regulatory Officials (SPRO)*.

Within PPQ, the National Identification Services (NIS) staff is responsible for the official confirmation of potentially actionable suspect samples forwarded by submitters to authorities recognized by NIS. Once confirmed, NIS forwards identification results to the Emergency and Domestic Programs (EDP) staff who are responsible for the distribution of notification results, either by e-mail or telephone, to internal and external entities who coordinate actions that may include a plant health emergency response.

While PPQ's goal is to have a notification protocol that ensures timely and effective notification of identification confirmations, it may not be applicable in all circumstances. The protocol described here should be used as a basis for determining how best to proceed with the distribution and communication of confirmatory identification results.

Notification Considerations

Notifications occur upon a *positive confirmation, negative determination, or inconclusive result* of pest identification. While NIS may use other officially recognized laboratories or expert identifiers to identify a pest, NIS will always be the final authority for pest identification results. Internal or external laboratories or experts performing confirmation of potentially actionable suspect samples or specimens are to communicate results directly to NIS and only through the means established by NIS and no other entity.

* International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures No. 5: Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms (ISPM 5) defines a pest as "Any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products."

"Plant pest" is defined in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), part 330 - Federal Plant Pest Regulations; General; Plant Pests, Biological Control Organisms, and Associated Articles; Garbage, section §330.100 Definitions, as "Any living stage of any of the following that can directly or indirectly injure, cause damage to, or cause disease in any plant or plant product: A protozoan, nonhuman animal, parasitic plant, bacterium, fungus, virus or viroid, infectious agent or other pathogen, or any article similar to or allied with any of the foregoing."

PPQ communicates results of negative determinations of suspect pests and/or the identification of non-quarantine pests back to the SPHD and SPRO of the state where the sample was collected without further evaluation. Additionally, PPQ shares these notifications with PPQ managers and employees, the president of the National Plant Board (NPB), and requests to the state to forward the notification to the record originator or submitter as appropriate. However, at times the urgency and distribution of notifications may vary widely based upon the plant pest's regulatory significance and history. PPQ considers two primary questions when determining the distribution of notifications within PPQ and with outside entities: (1) is this a new or significant pest detection, and (2) if not, is there a management/eradication program already underway in the United States?

Limiting Conditions

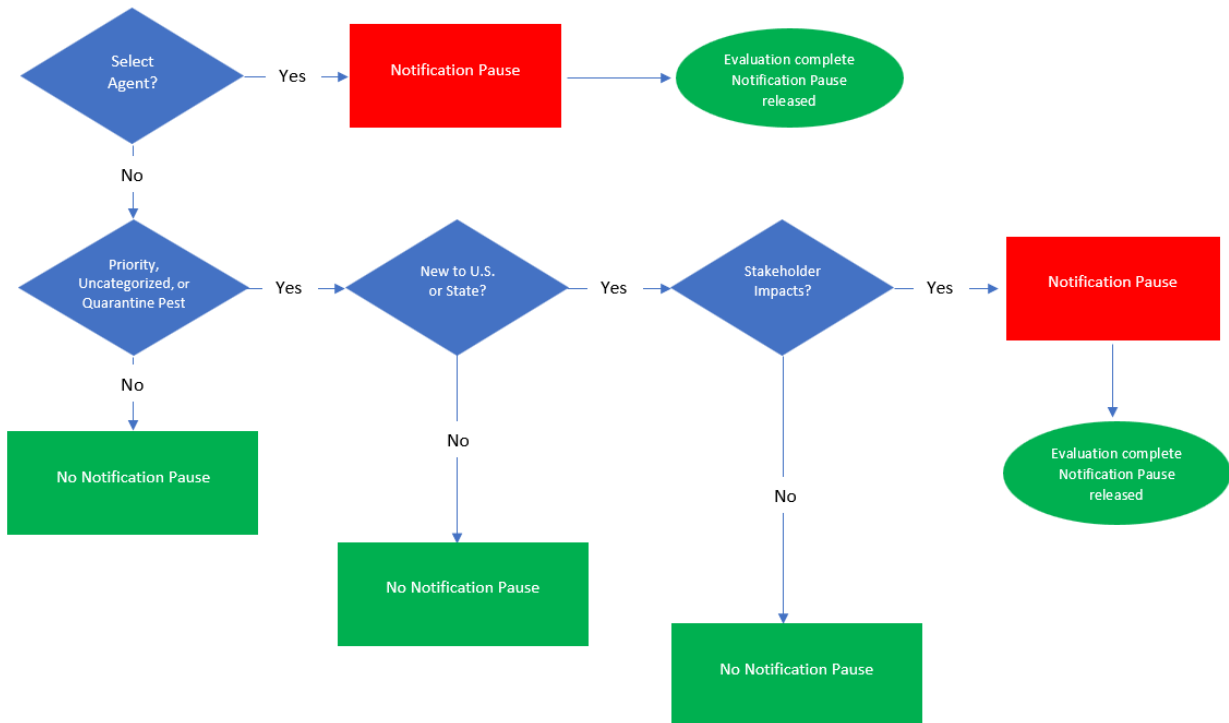
At times, there is not enough information about a suspect plant pest detection to confirm the identity of the pest. Making this determination may take additional time, as it may be based upon its biology and the availability of relevant scientific expertise and literature. For example, many plant pathogens can only be identified through molecular techniques while for certain insects, identification is based on morphological characteristics of larval or pupal life stages. There may be situations where so little is known about an unidentified plant pest that PPQ or cooperators must develop and validate new diagnostic protocols to accomplish the identification.

Notification Pause

When first detected, certain pests may have the potential to impact trade and/or industry sectors. A **notification pause** is a PPQ internal process that creates time to evaluate the potential impacts of the detection, align proper actions, and establish communications with impacted state(s). During a notification pause, PPQ may manage the official confirmation of positive identification results at very high managerial and administrative levels and limits notification to only authorized recipients, including the SPHD and SPRO where the pest was detected. PPQ will determine which pests to place under a notification pause and will consult with the impacted SPRO and the NPB president to determine when to implement and release a notification pause.

PPQ considers four sequential criteria or conditions in determining if a notification pause is warranted (**Figure 1**). First, if the plant pest is a select agent (i.e., biological agents and toxins that have been determined to have the potential to pose a severe threat to public health and safety, to animal and plant health, or to animal or plant products [codified in Title 7, CFR, part 331 Possession, Use, and Transfer of Select Agents and Toxins, section § 331.3 PPQ select agents and toxins]), then PPQ will implement a notification pause. Second, if the plant pest is a PPQ national priority pest, quarantined, or uncategorized (i.e., unknown quarantine status) then PPQ may implement a notification pause after considering if it is a first-time detection and its industry or trade impacts. For pests previously detected in the United States, a state, or an area within a state, PPQ will implement a notification pause if there are potentially significant industry or trade impacts in the United States.

Figure 1: Notification Pause Workflow



Notification Pause sequential workflow conditions:

- Is this a select agent?
- Is this a priority pest, quarantine pest, or uncategorized pest?
- Is the pest new to the United States, a state, or area within a state?
- Are there significant industry or trade impacts?

Notification Protocol

For newly detected pests and established program pests, the guide on Table 1 identifies situations and the individual recipients that should receive notifications for each situation. PPQ created a shared email inbox (Domestic Notifications and Confirmatory Results [DNCR]:

PPQ.EDP.DNCR@usda.gov) to help simplify sending notifications of confirmatory results. Should a state have questions regarding confirmatory identification results, PPQ asks that they reply to or direct their questions to the DNCR email address.

It is the responsibility of those receiving the notifications to further forward the message to those in their respective organization or agency that have a need to know, as well as to the submitting laboratory, identifier, or originator of the specimens or samples as appropriate. However, the information contained in these notifications is sensitive and recipients should not share or forward to those outside of the affected state until the SPHD and SPRO, in consultation with PPQ, decide that circumstances allow the sharing of the information.

TABLE 1: Email’s Subject Heading and Distribution for Pest Identification and Diagnostic Results

If the message is to communicate the status of a pest that is:	Then send the message:	Title the subject as:	And, in the message, say:
<p>New to U.S.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Not new to the U.S., but a significant detection in a new state</p>	<p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPHD of state of detection (1) * ▪ SPRO of state of detection (1) ▪ Pest Evaluation & Response Team (8) ▪ National Operations Manager–New Pests (4) <p>CC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PPQ Management Team (8) ▪ EDP Management Team (10) ▪ National Plant Board President (1) ▪ PEIP Board of Directors (7) ▪ Phytosanitary Issues Management (4) ▪ Science and Technology Pest ID (4) ▪ New Pest Advisory Group (4) ▪ Director Supervising the National Operations Manager (1) ▪ Associate Executive Director and Director for the State of detection (2) ▪ PPQ Outreach & Communication (4) ▪ National Identification Services Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator (7) ▪ National Identification Services Urgent Desk (19) 	<p>CONFIRMED ID: <i>x</i> samples positive for <i>Genus species</i>, common name (or abbreviation) from state (two- letter code) – New US/State Record</p>	<p>At the top of the message body say:</p> <p>“The information in this email is sensitive and intended only for recipients. Use discretion when forwarding or sharing this information.”</p> <p>In the body of the message, say:</p> <p>“See the confirmatory ID notification below. Please forward this notification to the originator, and/or submitter of the (specimen / sample).”</p>

If the message is to communicate the status of a pest that is:	Then send the message:	Title the subject as:	And, in the message, say:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Associative National Specialist for the Identification in Notification (1) 		
<p>Not new to the U.S. and has a PPQ domestic or emergency program</p>	<p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPHD of state of detection (1) ▪ SPRO of state of detection (1) ▪ National Policy Manager if a PPQ pest program or to EDP's Pest Evaluation and Response if the pest is uncategorized (1) ▪ National Operations Manager involved in the associated pest cross-functional working group (CFWG) (1) ▪ Science and Technology representative involved in the associated pest CFWG (1) <p>CC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EDP Management Team (10) ▪ PEIP Board of Directors (7) ▪ Phytosanitary Issues Management (4) ▪ Science and Technology Pest ID (4) ▪ New Pest Advisory Group (4) ▪ Director Supervising the National 	<p>CONFIRMED ID / CONFIRMED NEGATIVE / INCONCLUSIVE: <i>x</i> samples positive/negative/ inconclusive for <i>Genus species</i>, common name (or abbreviation) from state (two-letter code).</p>	<p>At the top of the message body say: "The information in this email is sensitive and intended only for recipients. Use discretion when forwarding or sharing this information."</p> <p>In the body of the message, say: "See the confirmatory ID notification below. Please forward this notification to the originator, and/or submitter of the (specimen / sample)."</p>

If the message is to communicate the status of a pest that is:	Then send the message:	Title the subject as:	And, in the message, say:
	<p>Operations Manager (1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Associate Executive Director and Director for the State of detection (2) ▪ PPQ Outreach & Communication (4) ▪ National Identification Services Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator (7) ▪ National Identification Services Urgent Desk (19) ▪ Associative National Specialist for the Identification in Notification (1) 		
<p>Not new to the U.S., not a quarantine pest, and/or not a PPQ domestic or emergency program</p>	<p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPHD of state of detection (1) ▪ SPRO of state of detection (1) ▪ EDP’s Pest Evaluation and Response (for uncategorized pests) (8) <p>CC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EDP Management Team (10) ▪ PEIP Board of Directors (7) ▪ Phytosanitary Issues Management (4) ▪ Science and Technology Pest ID (4) ▪ Associate Executive Director and Director for the State of detection (2) ▪ National Identification Services Domestic Diagnostic Coordinator (7) ▪ National Identification Services Urgent Desk (19) 	<p>CONFIRMED ID / CONFIRMED NEGATIVE / INCONCLUSIVE: <i>x</i> samples positive/negative/ inconclusive for <i>Genus</i> <i>species</i>, common name (or abbreviation) from state (two-letter code).</p>	<p>At the top of the message body say: “The information in this email is sensitive and intended only for recipients. Use discretion when forwarding or sharing this information.”</p> <p>In the body of the message, say: “See the confirmatory ID notification below. Please forward this notification to the originator, and/or submitter of the (specimen / sample).”</p>

If the message is to communicate the status of a pest that is:	Then send the message:	Title the subject as:	And, in the message, say:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Associative National Specialist for the Identification in Notification (1) 		

* Numbers within parentheses in the table above indicate the approximate number of recipients in each recipient group list.

Subject Line Examples

Subject: CONFIRMED ID: one sample positive for *Xyleborus glabratus*, Red bay ambrosia beetle, from Lincoln Parish, LA

Subject: CONFIRMED ID: one sample positive for *Duponchelia fovealis* (Crambidae) in PA - new state record

Subject: CONFIRMED NEGATIVE: six samples negative for *Phytophthora ramorum* from IN

Subject: INCONCLUSIVE: two samples inconclusive for HLB from LA

Subject: CONFIRMED ID: two samples positive for *Chrysodeixis chalcites* (Noctuidae), Golden-twin spot moth, in samples from MI - new US record