# International and Regional Plant Health Standards

Last Modified:

Plant health standards protect international and regional trade systems against pest introduction and spread. APHIS, along with counterparts from around the world, create standards that can be implemented by the United States and other countries.

APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) program represents our country in the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO).

## PPQ's Role in IPPC and NAPPO

The IPPC is an international plant protection agreement that aims to prevent the introduction and spread of plant pests and promote appropriate measures for their control. There are currently 184 countries that have signed the agreement and form the IPPC community. Together, they govern phytosanitary activities of the Convention, oversee development of international plant health standards, encourage exchange of official and scientific information, and provide technical assistance to developing member countries.

Created in 1976, NAPPO is the regional plant protection organization for North America. Its member countries are the United States, Canada, and Mexico. NAPPO members coordinate efforts to protect regional plant resources against the entry, establishment, and spread of regulated plant pests, while facilitating regional trade into and between member countries.

APHIS-PPQ is an active participant and U.S. leader at the table with IPPC and NAPPO. We develop and implement international and regional plant health standards and ensure that U.S. interests are well-represented. Furthermore, we:

- Provide subject matter experts
- Help create work plans
- Identify strategic priorities
- Promote science-based approaches to harmonize phytosanitary measures.

## International and Regional Harmonization

To support PPQ’s international and regional harmonization work, we established the International Phytosanitary Standards (IPS) team in 2012 to coordinate, oversee, and manage U.S. activities, resources, and efforts. This occurs at two primary standard setting institutions–global plant health standard setting at the IPPC, and regional standards development at NAPPO.

That same year, we also established a cross functional working group known as the Harmonization Advisory Group under a PPQ charter (updated in 2019). This group provides a virtual organization framework to:

- Leverage resources from across PPQ,
- Coordinate and implement PPQ strategies,
- Ensure internally vetted positions, and
- Enable timely and effective communications with the broader PPQ community in relation to harmonization efforts.

## International and Regional Plant Health Standards

## Requests for Topics, Treatment Data, and Experts

The International Plant Protection Convention and North American Plant Protection Organization request input from member countries on plant health standards.

## Draft Plant Health Standards

Feedback from stakeholders helps us create safe and fair international plant health standards, ensuring a level playing field for U.S. products abroad.

### Adopted International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs)

The IPPC is the only international standard setting organization for plant health recognized by the World Trade Organization (WTO) under the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement).

The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures adopts international standards for phytosanitary (plant health) measures, known as ISPMs. Standards in themselves are not regulatory instruments, but they come into force once countries establish requirements based on specific standards within their national legislation. Requests for specific information on import requirements should be addressed to the national plant protection organization of the country of import.

For more information about IPPC standards, contact PPQ's IPPC Technical Director at stephanie.m.dubon@usda.gov.

### Adopted Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (RSPMs)

NAPPO develops science-based regional standards for phytosanitary measures (RSPMs), which are intended to protect regional agricultural, forest, and other plant resources against regulated plant pests while facilitating trade. The NAPPO Executive Committee approves all RSPMs.

For more information about NAPPO standards, contact PPQ's NAPPO Technical Director at stephanie.m.dubon@usda.gov.

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