

Which of the goals from the APS strategic plan does your group most currently align with? (select all that apply)

X Goal 1: Secure the future of APS as the premier source of plant health knowledge dissemination in a competitive environment

X Goal 2: Strengthen APS as the premiere professional organization for plant health science

Goal 3: Foster innovative conference strategy to meet member needs and expectations for knowledge exchange and networking

Please provide a brief narrative describing 1) activity associated with the current year's APS meeting and future annual meetings (e.g., special sessions sponsored or cosponsored, committee meetings held, etc.), and 2) activity outside annual meeting, if any (e.g., meetings, workshops, projects, other initiatives): (Maximum 1500 characters)

1. APS annual meeting – PPB is hosting a post-annual meeting workshop “Advocacy Training for All: The basics of public policy involvement for scientists across the spectrum”. We plan to propose special sessions and listening sessions with government agency representatives for the next meeting.

2. Activities outside annual meeting - PPB continued to engage congressional representatives and US government agency leaders to advocate sustainable funding for research and evidence-driven regulations and policies. Our current advocacy targets include, 1) promoting broad support for plant health research in U.S. government science agencies and increased appropriations in the next five years, 2) maintaining the integrity of NIFA by increasing the agency workforce to manage programs effectively, 3) maintaining funding the Agricultural Research Service, the USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, and the US Forest Service, and support for the NPDN, 4) supporting science-based policies and regulations affecting agriculture, including those on the use of microbes, biotechnology (genome editing and genetic engineering), and antimicrobials in agriculture.

PPB maintained and strengthened relationships with federal agencies to ensure that they have easy access to expertise from APS. PPB provided comments to federal agencies on several issues, ranging from proposed pesticide regulations, policies that affect international scholars, federal funding initiatives, and priority setting.

PPB partnered with professional societies such as the American Institute for Biological Sciences (AIBS) and the American Society of Microbiology (ASM), to provide information to the APS members on relevant government policy changes and opportunities for input. PPB aims to inform the APS membership of new policy issues as they arise, including collaboration opportunities with ARS, changes in APHIS and EPA regulations, and how APS members can engage in public policy.

Please provide a brief description of the key scientific or societal objectives you are currently focused on for the coming year and the expected outcomes of each: (Maximum 1500 characters):

PPB's key scientific and societal objectives are to advocate on behalf of APS for science-based public policies, sustainable funding for programs that support agriculture and plant pathology and programs to support a well-trained workforce.

PPB submitted comments to federal agencies on several regulatory and policy issues affecting APS and members of the scientific community. Specifically, PPB;

- expressed concern to NSF about changes to the Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) which would identify priority research areas and create inequality among students and institutions.
- provided positive support to USAID on the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops (FTF CETC).
- advocated for the RISE Act legislation that supports emergency relief funding for federal science agencies.
- expressed support to the House and Senate Committee on Appropriations for increased support for microbiome research.
- expressed strong opposition to the Department of Homeland Security's plan to establish a fixed time period of admission and extension of stay procedure for non-immigration academic students that would hinder recruitment of international scholars.
- expressed opposition to legislation to amend pesticide regulations under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide (FIFRA) and undermine science-based policies.
- signed letters to USDA Secretary Vilsack and members of the House Committee on Agriculture expressing support for increased investments in agricultural research and development programs.
- supported a petition for non-regulated status by APHIS for the genetically-modified blight tolerant American Chestnut.
- hosted a virtual meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to build relationships.
- published a PhytoNews Article (June 2021) advocating for science-based pesticide regulations by EPA.
- engaged the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) to support the Agriculture Innovation Agenda.
- advocated for the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS)'s priorities for the Biden administration.
- provided input to the APS Public Policy Visioning Task Force to define the future of PPB.

Share any actionable items to facilitate achieving your objectives, if any, for action or response from APS Council: (Maximum 2500 characters)

The PPB will implement the recommendations of the Public Policy Visioning Task Force, appointed by the APS president, to define the future of the PPB as a more effective advocate for APS members. To accomplish this, the PPB will continue to be a source of evidence-based information for U.S. government agencies in their formulation of policies and regulations. The PPB will regularly interact and partner with our federal agencies such as NIFA, ARS, APHIS, EPA, NASS, FDA and the Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP) through webinars, listening sessions, briefing papers and face-to-face meetings in which PPB will provide input for priority setting and decision making that impact the APS membership and our

associated colleagues in the scientific community. The PPB is planning additional virtual meetings to engage the regulatory agencies of FDA, EPA and APHIS when implementing rules and guidance that might affect disease management practices and research on plant pathogens. PPB will monitor APHIS plant pest regulations and select agent status, EPA transparency rules and pesticide risk assessments, and CDC and FDA's positions on antimicrobials used for agricultural crop protection and food biosafety issues.

The PPB will continue to engage federal legislators and appropriators on changing priorities and proposed legislative actions. The PPB will closely follow any changes in, or omission of, agricultural research funding as a priority in COVID relief and other introduced bills. We will follow NIFA, NSF and DOE funding programs and any Congressional action to reconsider the Farm Bill or other actions which might impact the National Plant Diagnostic Laboratory Network (NPDN).

Engagement with APS members, boards, committees and offices is a core strategic goal of PPB as recommended by the Public Policy Visioning Task Force. In serving as an advocate for APS members for public policy, funding and programs in agriculture and related disciplines, the PPB will continue to author or coordinate *Phytopathology News* articles and other outlets to inform APS members of pending actions and to promote evidence-based science affecting agriculture including biotechnology and antimicrobials in agriculture. PPB will inform APS members of federal policy affecting plant health research and the integrity of our science. The PPB launched the new online Community Admin Communications Tool and will use it broadly to share communications with the APS membership, boards, committees and offices.

The PPB expresses our thanks to Council for the financial support provided to engage a Washington-based firm to represent APS interests and provide input into policy discussions. Expected outcomes and milestones will be realized by PPB's advocacy efforts measured by recognition of the PPB as a reliable source of credible and evidence-based information to government agencies and by PPB providing representation to APS members of opportunities to engage in policy discussions.

Appointments:

Rick Bennett became chair of the PPB and joined by new members Mike Boehm, Ron Walcott, Joyce Loper and our new 2020-2022 intern Hannah Rivedal.