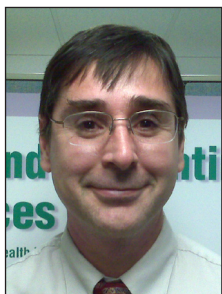


PPQ Response to APS Survey About the PPQ Permitting Process

Robert S. Johnson, Branch Chief Evaluation and Permitting of Regulated Organisms and Soil Plant Health Programs USDA-APHIS, Robert.S.Johnson@aphis.usda.gov



Robert S. Johnson

PPQ appreciates the outstanding effort by The American Phytopathological Society (APS) to evaluate stakeholder perception of the PPQ permitting process. The data clearly demonstrate that changes in permit processing instituted by PPQ have resulted in posi-

tive outcomes. We attribute this shift to our new electronic permitting system, increased staffing, and a new customer support center. These enhancements have enabled the PPQ permit unit to process permit requests more efficiently, improve turnaround time, and interact with the regulated community in a more personal and timely manner. While we appreciate that our customers have seen significant improvements, we recognize that further improvements can be made and are committed to doing so.

PPQ appreciates the substantial efforts by the APS committees on widely prevalent pathogens to identify low-risk organisms subject to an expedited permitting process. We have exercised an expedited permitting process for widely prevalent viral and bacterial pathogens since 2000 and expect to deliver a similar program this year for widely prevalent fungi. We will make an announcement about the status of the widely prevalent pathogen program in the special session of the 2009 APS Annual Meeting in Portland, OR. Meanwhile, be sure to browse our website for updates to the PPQ permitting program for regulated organism and soil at www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/permits/organism/index.shtml.

You may also contact our Customer Support Center toll free at 1.866.524.5421 (pest permits) or 1.877.770.5990 (automated system) or by e-mail at permits@aphis.usda.gov or pest.permits@aphis.usda.gov. ■