National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN)

NPDN – A Critical Program to Safeguard U.S. Agriculture from the Threats of Plant Pests

Background: The NPDN, established in 2002, focuses on the early detection, accurate diagnosis, and rapid communications needed to help mitigate the impact of endemic, emerging, and exotic pathogens and pests that attack agricultural, forest, and landscape plants in the U.S. This mission is accomplished through a coordinated network of diagnostic laboratories and experts at land grant universities, state departments of agriculture, and industry. The network develops and deploys regionally and nationally coordinated programs in diagnostics, training and education, and response. In addition, the network ensures the availability of essential multi-state surge capacity during major outbreaks. In many recent outbreaks, including the Asian Soybean Rust, Plum Pox Virus, Sudden Oak Death Pathogen, Ug99 Strain of the Wheat Stem Rust Pathogen, the NPDN played a critical role by providing vital diagnostic information.

The training and diagnostic contributions provided by NPDN in collaborations with partners throughout the country are essential and have been highly effective in safeguarding U.S. agriculture from introduced plant pests and pathogens. NPDN labs routinely support national, state, and local response to disease and pest outbreaks, providing surge capacity for over 1,000,000 high consequence samples. Approximately 11,500 First Detectors have been trained and registered nationwide. By verifying that traded agricultural products are free of quarantine pests and diseases, export and domestic markets have remained open, thereby protecting jobs in U.S. industry. The NPDN is a model for efficiency, communication and integration across jurisdictions. In 2010, the NPDN was acknowledged with the ***USDA NIFA Partnership Award for Innovative Program Models*.**

The maintenance and financial support of this network of professional diagnosticians with state of the art tools and a large number of field pest detectors is essential for assuring rapid response to and mitigation of potentially devastating plant pathogens.

Solution: APS requests that funding for the NPDN is continued and restored in NIFA's integrated programs to the 2010 level ($4.4 million). Failure to do so will result in increased risk from introduced pests and pathogens and reduced stability of our agricultural enterprise.

Appropriations Request: Funding for the NPDN is included in the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) budget, Integrated Activities account, "Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative (FADI) program. The program is authorized by *Section* 1484 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3351(a)). FY 2010 funding for the entire FADI program was at $9.830 million of which $4.4 million was allocated to the NPDN. APS requests that the full FADI program be restored at the FY 2010 level and that not less than $4.4 million be allocated to the NPDN.

Contacts: APS Public Board (PPB) members **Jan Leach** (jan.leach@colostate.edu) and APS Washington Liaison **Kellye Eversole** (eversole@eversoleassociates.com) are available to answer any additional questions.

APS PUBLIC POLICY BOARD