

PRESS RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Horticulture Priorities Continue to be Supported Through APHIS Farm Bill Program

Columbus, Ohio – On March 18, USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced the spending plan for this year’s Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program – Farm Bill Section 10007. USDA Secretary Vilsack announced the program will provide nearly \$58 million to support mitigation efforts for specialty crops, a 20 percent increase over last year, due to the expanded support for our industry’s crops in the new Farm Bill.

APHIS support for some of the horticulture industry’s most significant pathogen concerns continues in this round of projects. Boxwood Blight work has been funded for a fourth year with \$834,000 in support. Downy mildew research with a particular focus on impatiens downy mildew (IDM) received \$417,000. The second year of rapid diagnostic tool development on rose rosette disease (RRD) was funded at \$85,000. Solutions to *Phytophthora ramorum* and similar pathogens continue to be supported at the National Ornamentals Research Site at Dominican University (CA) and other locations.

A project AmericanHort was particularly enthusiastic about in this round brings together AmericanHort, American Beekeeper Federation, American Honey Producers Association, American Seed Trade Association, and Pollinator Partnership for the first time on a coordinated project fully funded at \$272,000. The project will identify which plants already available in the trade are the most valuable forage sources for bees at different times of the year. The results will help to identify plants for which growers should be especially cautious with systemic and long-residual insecticides, and help inform the public about which landscape plants they can purchase from their local garden centers for helping pollinators in their area.

Also announced Wednesday was the funding for the National Clean Plant Network (NCPN), which provides pathogen-tested clean plants to the commercial nursery trade for further propagation and production. In the last Farm Bill, NCPN was merged with the Plant Pest and Disease Management Program, but the review process for project proposals remains autonomous. NCPN focuses on high-value genera with serious pest concerns, such as apples, grapevines, stone fruit, and berries.

The three hubs for the fruit tree network, Clemson University, University of California – Davis, and University of Washington, received over \$2.1 million in total to support the network’s goal of making disease-free, certified planting materials available to the industry and ensure the global competitiveness of U.S. specialty crop producers. In its inaugural year in the NCPN the garden rose program will be administered by the program stalwart, Foundation Plant Services at UC Davis, and a new network center at Texas A&M, which received over \$115,000 to launch the new program.

Also announced, AmericanHort and other members of USDA-APHIS’ Farm Bill Management Team were recognized with the Safeguarding Award, recognizing a commitment to innovation and excellence. “Our industry’s partnership with APHIS is a shining example and a model for solving tough problems,” said Craig Regelbrugge, AmericanHort’s senior vice president for industry advocacy and research. “Together, we’re tackling threats to our industry’s very future.”

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AmericanHort was formed in 2014 by the consolidation of the American Nursery & Landscape Association and OFA – The Association of Horticulture Professionals. With a combined history of 220+ years, AmericanHort supports nearly 16,000 member and affiliated businesses that include breeders, greenhouse and nursery growers, garden retailers, distributors, interior and exterior landscape professionals, florists, students, educators, researchers, manufacturers, and all of those who are part of the industry market chain. The horticulture industry's production, wholesale, retail, and landscape service components have annual sales of \$163 billion, and sustain over 1,150,000 full- and part-time jobs. Our mission is to unite, promote, and advance the horticulture industry through advocacy, collaboration, connectivity, education, market development, and research. The association has offices in Columbus, Ohio for administration and member services, and in Washington, DC to facilitate government relations and research activities.