Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention

Invasive pest and disease introductions are a constant threat to nursery and greenhouse crops and plant resources in general, directly damaging crops and disrupting access to markets. The most serious pest threats can trigger quarantines or mandated plant destruction. Rarely are growers compensated for resulting losses. Pest prevention, early detection, and response are key. Novel techniques are needed to bolster the effectiveness of mitigation efforts from inspection at ports and airports to the farm level.

Plant Protection Act Sec. 7721, known as the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program (PPDMDPP), including the National Clean Plant Network (NCPN), is the primary Farm Bill program tailored to addressing these threats. The program is a shining success story, but the passage of time and inflation erodes the program’s potential.

Increase Funding to Sustain the Success of Both Programs.

Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention and National Clean Plant Network

Policy Recommendation – Plant Protection Act Sec. 7721 should be funded at $90 million per year.

Policy Recommendation – National Clean Plant Network, a component of PPA Sec. 7721, should be funded at not less than $8 million per year.

Current Status and Background – Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program (PPDMDPP) currently invests $75 million per year in targeted projects covering pest and disease surveillance, development of analysis and response tools, public outreach and education, and related topics. Project suggestions covering six goal areas are submitted annually and vetted in a stakeholder-driven process.

The National Clean Plant Network (NCPN), a separately administered part of PPA7721, safeguards and supports specialty crops by providing a sustainable source of clean plant material through innovation, collaboration, translational science, and outreach. NCPN covers an array of high-value specialty crops with high-consequence propagation-transmissible disease threats. Crops currently covered by the NCPN include berries; citrus; deciduous tree fruit such as apples, peaches, pears, and cherries; grapes; hops; roses; and sweet potatoes. NCPN currently includes over 40 programs operating in 20 states. The Plant Protection Act specifies that NCPN be funded at not less than $5 million per year; in FY23, NCPN was funded at $7.75 million.