

THE COOPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PEST SURVEY PROGRAM (CAPS): SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT TO OPTIMIZE A NATIONAL PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

The mission of the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) program is to provide a survey profile of exotic plant pests in the United States deemed to be of regulatory significance to USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ), State Departments of Agriculture, tribal governments, and cooperators by confirming the presence or absence of environmentally and/or economically harmful plant pests that impact agriculture or the environment and that have potential to be of phytosanitary significance; and by establishing and maintaining a comprehensive network of cooperators and stakeholders to facilitate our mission and to safeguard our American plant resources.

The Center for Plant Health Science and Technology (CPHST) supports PPQ regulatory decisions and operations through methods development work, scientific investigation, analyses, and technology.

For the CAPS program, CPHST develops tools for the survey and identification of CAPS target pests, including: (1) specific, effective attractants and traps, (2) molecular diagnostic and Lucid identification tools, (3) risk-based maps based on host, climate, and pathways of target pests, and (4) survey protocols based on commodities, habitat, and pathways.

Current challenges include (1) identifying the most appropriate survey method for early detection surveys versus methods used in monitoring surveys; (2) balancing the cost of survey equipment, efficiency of traps and lures, and identification resources; and (3) reporting negative data for targets without efficient attractants (i.e., wood borers and bark beetles, pathogens, nematodes, etc.).

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