



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Keeping U.S. Agriculture Healthy for America and the World

2024
IMPACT REPORT

Answering the Call To Protect American Agriculture



2024 was a year that confronted the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) with new challenges. It was a year that forced us to find new and creative solutions to animal and plant health threats.

In 2024, we published several significant rules that took an extraordinary amount of effort and will have lasting impacts on the APHIS mission. And we responded to plant and animal health events we had never encountered.

In the spring of 2024, we faced an unprecedented detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in dairy cows. APHIS has dealt with HPAI for decades. But the spillover of the virus from birds to dairy cows was a novel and evolving situation that demanded a dynamic response.

Leveraging relationships with our stakeholders, we were able to quickly set up surveillance plans, share data, send key messages to producers, approve vaccine trials, and support emerging research. The experience reinforced some of our core agency tenets. By working together, relying on science, and respecting our country's hardworking farmers and ranchers, we can navigate even the most unexpected and complicated situations.

And this was just one of many challenges APHIS encountered in 2024. We also dealt with multiple fruit fly outbreaks and a resurgence in South and Central America of new world screwworm, among many other animal and plant health threats.

Through it all, I've seen the character of APHIS' workforce shine as brightly as ever. We possess a wide range of knowledge and skills that are essential to support our broad mission. We work hard, think

strategically, and when our country needs us—we answer the call.

A remarkable data point illustrates this: in 2024, more than 1400 employees across our agency deployed in response to plant and animal health emergencies. That's nearly 17% of our workforce—or 1 out of every 6 APHIS employees.

Some deployed to manage logistics of the avian influenza response. Some handled communications for joint incidence command teams. Some volunteered to trap fruit flies or contribute to new world screwworm efforts. Countless others made above-and-beyond contributions in their colleagues' absence, accepting a larger workload or filling in behind those responding out in the field.

At APHIS, no matter who we are—or what we do—we all share the same mission to protect America's agricultural plants, animals, and natural resources. Whether they know it or not, our work touches every American every day...in the form of thriving crops and forests, healthy livestock and poultry, a bountiful and safe food supply, safe agricultural trade that boosts the economy, balanced and healthy wildlife populations, humane care for vulnerable animals, and helpful products of biotechnology.

I'm proud to lead this agency, and proud to share our story with you in APHIS' 2024 Impact Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Watson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael Watson, Administrator
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture



Mission: To protect the health and value of America's agricultural and natural resources

Who We Are



8,481
Employees
Worldwide



\$3B
Annual
Budget



6
Operational
Program Units

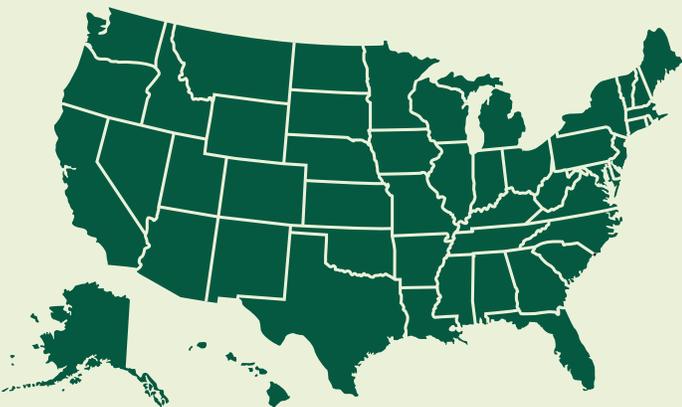


4
Management
Support Units



7
Labs and
Research Hubs

Where We Serve



50
States and the
District of Columbia
4
Territories
30
Countries



Our Focus



Thriving
Crops and
Forests



Healthy
Livestock
and Poultry



Safe
Trade



Balanced,
Healthy
Wildlife
Populations



Humane Care
for Vulnerable
Animals



Safe
Biotechnology



Thriving Crops and Forests

American farms and forests produce vast resources for our country—and the world. Millions of people depend on our Nation's plants for food, clothing, fuel, and jobs. We protect these resources from harmful pests and diseases, so they stay healthy and profitable.

Allocated more than \$70 million to support 374 projects under the Plant Protection Act's Section 7721 program as part of a nationwide effort to strengthen the country's infrastructure for pest detection, surveillance, and mitigation, as well as protect the U.S. nursery system.

Issued more than 663,000 Federal phytosanitary certificates directly or through authorized State and county cooperators to aid the export of U.S. plants and plant products to approximately 200 trading partners.



Conducted technical negotiations to open, maintain, and expand export markets, and subsequently facilitated the release of held shipments—an added value of approximately \$459.3 million.

Helped expand the Global Electronic Phytosanitary (ePhyto) Solution, which makes the exchange of export certificates fast, efficient, and fraud resistant. In fiscal year 2024 alone, the United States sent more than 352,000 ePhytos to 107 trading partners and received 548,000 ePhytos from 61 trading partners.

Inspected and cleared 4.9 billion pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables from 19 countries before they were shipped to the United States.

Cleared 26,813 imported shipments containing 1.8 billion plant units (cuttings, rooted plants, tissue culture, etc.) and over 584,887 kilograms of seeds of woody plants. In the process, we prevented the entry of 1,830 quarantine-significant pests at U.S. plant inspection stations.

Identified 99,000 pests found during U.S. Customs and Border Protection inspections of cargo, mail, and express carrier shipments, taking quick action to prevent those of concern from entering the United States.

Issued 23,975 import permits and 10,248 regulatory guidance letters for plants and plant products and responded to over 31,329 inquiries about imports and plant health permits.

Completed 287 comprehensive, science-based risk analyses associated with imports, exports, invasive pest threats, and program requirements to support safe trade and protect American agriculture.

Conducted plant pest surveys targeting 202 unique pests with cooperators in 50 States and 4 Territories.

Worked with more than 185 International Plant Protection Convention members to advance international standards that facilitate safe agricultural trade.

Collaborated with counterparts in the Americas to address emerging plant pest issues. With our counterparts in Canada, we worked cooperatively on the management of high priority pests under the U.S. and Canada Coordinated Safeguarding Framework, which

provides a broad and holistic approach to safeguard North America against the threat of plant pests and diseases.

Monitored grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations in 13 Western States and treated 371,002 rangeland acres to control outbreaks, protecting nearly 813,000 acres of rangeland forage and wildlife habitat.

Allocated an additional \$89 million in USDA Commodity Credit Corporation emergency response funding to respond to several new exotic fruit fly outbreaks. As a result, we eradicated seven concurrent exotic fruit quarantines in California and five in Texas. APHIS' response efforts prevent the spread of these pests, which attack several hundred types of fruits and vegetables Americans eat every day.



Protected American agriculture from harmful plant pests and foreign animal diseases by intercepting 289,855 prohibited agricultural items and 3,008 quarantine-significant pests during baggage inspections. These inspections involved more than 16.7 million passengers bound for the U.S. mainland from Hawaii and Puerto Rico.



Healthy Livestock and Poultry

We keep America's agricultural animals healthy. A critical part of this work includes responding to serious animal diseases—and preventing these diseases from entering the United States. Our experts work hand-in-hand with our partners—including other Federal agencies, academic institutions, industry organizations, and state departments of agriculture—to protect America's valuable livestock, poultry, swine, and equine industries.



Continued an emergency program to address nationwide detections of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Since the outbreak began in February 2022, we have confirmed the virus in over 1300 poultry premises across the Nation and supported affected producers through depopulation, disposal, and indemnification programs.

Confirmed the first detection of HPAI H5N1 in a dairy herd in March 2024, and subsequently identified, investigated, and responded to H5N1 detections in livestock in over 900 herds across 17 States. We issued two Federal orders, implemented a producer support program, set up a voluntary monitoring and surveillance program for interested producers, and developed a national bulk milk testing strategy to help States protect the health of their dairy herds.



Provided training to support a nationwide network of more than 69,000 USDA-accredited veterinarians who serve as the first line of defense for reportable domestic and foreign animal diseases.

Awarded \$16.2 million to States, Tribes, land-grant universities, and industry organizations for 73 projects to enhance our Nation's ability to rapidly respond to and control animal disease outbreaks through the Farm Bill's National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program.

Awarded \$5 million in non-competitive funding to National Animal Health Laboratory Network laboratories for operational support and an additional \$1 million for 7 projects to enhance the early detection of high-consequence animal diseases.

Invested \$5 million in the National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank for additional foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) vaccine antigen concentrate to bolster reserves and incorporate a new antigen to be better prepared for potential outbreaks.

Monitored U.S. livestock health, including testing 40,619 samples for African swine fever (ASF) and/or classical swine fever and conducting 2,008 foreign animal disease investigations. Of these investigations, 1,141 involved vesicular diseases and 274 involved poultry diseases.

Licensed 83 manufacturers and permit holders for 1,378 active product licenses/permits for the control of animal diseases.

Endorsed approximately 365,000 health certificates to facilitate safe animal and animal product exports. We also approved 1,029 facilities to export U.S. animal products, maintaining and expanding the network of USDA-approved establishments to move animal products quickly and safely to global markets.



Continued to assist Hispaniola with ASF eradication and response efforts, including providing advice on surveillance, quarantine, depopulation, and disposal methods; providing testing support; and bolstering in-country testing capacity. This included direct laboratory support within the Dominican Republic and enforcing an ASF protection zone in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, among other critical activities.



Safe Trade

We have Foreign Service Officers and staff in 27 countries overseas—on the front line for U.S. agricultural health. Working with foreign governments and industries, we help them build capacity to control, manage, and eradicate pests and diseases. We also help our international partners establish and manage sustainable animal and plant health programs to ensure the safe trade of agriculture commodities between our countries, to help feed and clothe the world.



Opened new market access for American agricultural exports, including U.S. rice to Ecuador, Texas grapefruit to South Korea, and California peaches and nectarines to Vietnam. APHIS also opened markets for U.S. live cattle, day-old chicks, and hatching eggs to Mozambique and beef and bone meal to Ecuador and Peru.

Collaborated with foreign partners and agency experts to protect existing markets against trade disruptions. These efforts preserved critical markets for U.S.-origin goods, such as poultry products to Colombia, valued at \$105 million annually.

Negotiated with foreign officials to resolve delays with 323 U.S. shipments at foreign ports, totaling more than \$55 million. This prevented unnecessary economic losses while maintaining robust safety protocols.

Produced more than 53 billion sterile Mediterranean fruit flies at the El Pino sterile insect facility in Guatemala, supporting preventative release programs in California and Florida, along with population control efforts in Guatemala and Mexico.

Produced 5.6 billion sterile Mexican fruit flies at the San Miguel Petapa facility in Guatemala, supporting eradication activities in Texas and California, along with preventative release programs in northern Mexico, Texas, and California.

Worked with regional partners in Central America to implement a multilateral response to the New World screwworm outbreak, increasing production of sterile flies weekly from 20 million to 90 million. These efforts, combined with rigorous surveillance and livestock inspections, protected U.S. borders from this devastating pest.



Hosted 22 foreign engagements related to agricultural trade and U.S. regulatory processes, attended by 213 officials representing countries across Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. These efforts fostered international collaboration on trade and regulatory processes.



Delivered seminars and workshops, supported continuing education courses, and shared information both virtually and in person on a wide range of technical topics for officials representing countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas, and the Caribbean to increase their capacity to identify, diagnose, control, respond to, and recover from animal and plant pests and diseases.



Balanced, Healthy Wildlife Populations

Wildlife are one of America's most valued public resources. Yet wildlife-related problems—including disease threats, livestock predation, crop losses, property damage, and more—are common. In response, we lead our Nation's efforts to find innovative solutions that protect people, agriculture, and wildlife...so all can coexist and thrive.



Provided assistance to livestock producers on more than 123,000 occasions, including outreach and direct control activities to protect livestock from predation through a combination of techniques and tools. As much as possible, we responded using nonlethal methods like range riding, fladry, fencing, and husbandry practices.

Continued researching and promoting nonlethal methods to cooperators nationwide under the Nonlethal Initiative, which currently implements nonlethal assistance in 12 States and conducts research via three projects at the National Wildlife Research Center. This initiative protects livestock from large carnivores and reduces beaver damage.

Monitored and surveyed thousands of white-tailed deer and other animals (both wild and captive) for SARS-CoV-2 as part of a One Health initiative with Federal, State, and Tribal partners. These efforts helped identify species that may serve as reservoirs for the virus and better understand the virus' characteristics, species susceptibility, and routes of transmission.

Protected wildlife and public health by distributing more than 7.9 million oral rabies vaccination (ORV) baits to combat

raccoon rabies in 13 States and more than 890,000 ORV baits in Texas to prevent the reemergence of rabies in coyotes and gray foxes along the border with Mexico.

Partnered with Federal and State resource agencies, private organizations, and community groups on approximately 5,976 damage management projects that helped protect threatened and endangered bird species across 40 States, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



Worked with State and Federal partners to reduce or prevent feral swine damage on approximately 86 million acres in 35 States and 3 Territories, directly protecting agriculture, human health and safety, property, and natural resources.

Led feral swine eradication efforts and enhanced ASF surveillance in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, removing 910 and sampling 475 feral swine, to help protect the United States from this deadly animal disease.

Dispersed more than 168,000 double-crested cormorants, helping protect the aquaculture industry valued at \$1.5 billion nationally.



Helped more than 800 civil, military, and joint-use airports worldwide—comprising about 60 percent of all U.S. commercial passenger airports—reduce or avoid wildlife strike hazards to protect people and aircraft.

Led U.S. research to find innovative solutions for managing wildlife damage, conducting 185 studies with more than 155 research partners nationwide—with most of our work devoted to nonlethal tools and techniques.

Advanced our Nation's ability to manage wildlife resources wisely and effectively by sharing our research results and encouraging the use of new methods, with 100 peer-reviewed papers uploaded to the Digital Commons, and over 123,000 downloads from Digital Commons.

Donated nearly 159 tons of deer, goose, and other meat—more than 1 million servings of protein for people in need—and more than 34 tons of meat for animal consumption to animal rehabilitation centers, zoos, and other facilities, making full use of this resource from wildlife damage management work.



Humane Care for Vulnerable Animals

We protect more than 1 million vulnerable animals nationwide by enforcing two important laws: the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and the Horse Protection Act (HPA). Through inspections and outreach, we oversee thousands of breeders, dealers, and exhibitors; research facilities; transporters; dog importers; and managers of horse shows, exhibitions, and sales to make sure their animals receive care and treatment that meets Federal standards. We also provide national leadership on the safety and well-being of pets and other animals during disasters.

Oversaw more than 17,500 licensees and registrants ensuring the humane care and treatment of AWA-covered animals.

Expanded protection for animals under the AWA by implementing new standards for the humane treatment of birds, bringing more than 1,000 additional species under Animal Care's oversight.



Conducted over 9,700 AWA site inspections—including more than 1,200 unannounced inspections at research facilities—to assess the health, care, and treatment of animals covered under the AWA.

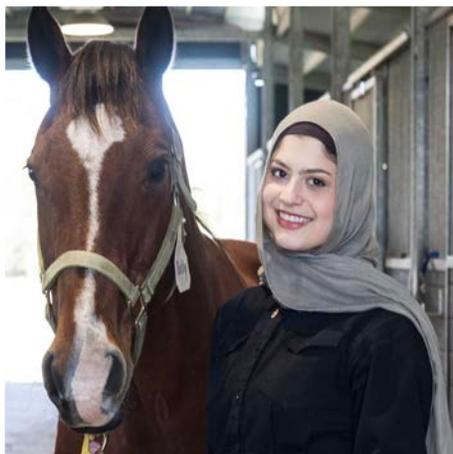
Inspected licensees and registrants for compliance with the AWA. Throughout the year, our inspectors found 96% of regulated facilities to be in substantial compliance, with 74% to have zero violations.

Took civil and administrative action to address alleged AWA violations, including opening 209 cases, issuing 134 official warnings, obtaining 19 administrative orders, and permanently revoking 16 other licenses to support AWA compliance and deter future violations.

Issued 2,295 import permits covering 6,089 dogs for resale in the United States, ensuring they are healthy, vaccinated, and over 6 months of age.

Continued supporting the Zoo and Aquarium All Hazards Partnership—which reached over 680 entities including animal facilities, professional and industry groups, private owners, veterinarians, and others in the exotic animal community—covering topics such as hurricanes, wildfires, SARS-COV-2, highly pathogenic avian influenza in zoos, and biosecurity and resilience for zoos and aquariums.

Attended 60 horse events and inspected 2,031 horses for compliance with the HPA.



Hosted or assisted with more than 17 education and outreach events. These include interagency, veterinary, breeder, research, and species-focused meetings, ranging from a Bat Welfare Symposium to a Canine Welfare Science Forum, a Contingency Planning Workshop, and the Puerto Rico Bird Expo. Conducted education and outreach activities with more than 2,700 individuals across the United States (as well as 40 foreign countries) to promote animal welfare.



Safe Biotechnology

We help American agriculture stay at the forefront of science and innovation. From healthier fruit, vegetable, and oil crops to products that reduce the use of pesticides and those that have higher yields, we evaluate the safety of new products developed using genetic engineering. We work alongside other Federal agencies to make sure these products are safe for U.S. agriculture and the environment.



Issued 63 Regulatory Status Review decisions to developers, informing them that their modified plants were not subject to regulation and could be safely grown—reducing the initial response time by 145 days.

Responded to 44 requests for confirmation that a plant met the criteria for exemption from regulation, within an average of 56 days from receiving the requests, including products involving grain, oilseed, fruit, vegetable, and cover crops. Ninety-eight percent of these products were developed by small- to medium-sized enterprises and public institutions.

Issued 875 authorizations to 281 organizations for the movement or field testing of organisms developed using genetic engineering.

Performed with State agricultural officials more than 540 inspections of authorized field trials involving organisms developed using genetic engineering.

Delivered more than 15 presentations to international stakeholders representing over 40 countries and participated in 12 bilateral engagements to offer technical information and build capacity abroad for regulating biotechnology.



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Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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