

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER TODD STAPLES  
2010-2011 LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST  
*AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY*

*TDA's Role in Agricultural Biosecurity*

Protecting Texas agriculture is an important function of the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) because it involves securing a vital part of our state's economy. TDA is the state's lead agency for coordinating prevention and response to plant pests and diseases, as well as other agricultural emergencies related to crop production in Texas. The agency accomplishes this through a multi-pronged regulatory approach involving licensing and routine licensee inspections, road station inspections, and destination market inspections. The road stations are operated in cooperation with the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to deter artificial introduction of pests into Texas. For the 2008-2009 biennium, the Texas Legislature appropriated \$1.3 million for TDA's enhanced inspections efforts. Consequently, TDA has increased the number of routine road station inspections, which are usually conducted in 8-hour shifts, 72-hour inspections at DPS weigh stations, inspections at shipment destinations, and targeted commodity inspections. These activities are providing useful information to better protect Texas against the introduction of harmful pests and diseases.

*Agricultural Biosecurity Needs*

At road stations in fiscal year 2008, TDA detected that approximately 7 percent of plant product shipments into the state violated quarantine regulations. TDA has also found a wide range of quarantine violations during market blitz quarantine inspections. As new pests and diseases are found in Florida, such as the red palm mite and Asian cycad scale, the pink hibiscus mealybug in Texas, and citrus greening in neighboring Louisiana, it is evident enhanced detection efforts are not only needed, but crucial to guard Texas agriculture against these and other pests. There is also a strong need to analyze inspection and interception data to uncover pathways of pest introduction, and to use trend analysis to better focus resources in high-risk areas. Minimizing the opportunity for plant pest or disease introduction reduces the chance for infestation that leads to increased costs to Texans and the potential loss of critical markets for the state's economy.

*LAR Exceptional Item #5 – Biosecurity Inspection Initiative*

This exceptional item proposes to increase the number of road station inspections, expand the number of market blitz inspections, and conduct pathway analysis and risk assessments to enhance quarantine enforcement activities. Additional employees, equipment and capital expenditures will be required to accomplish an expansion of program activities.

*TDA Biosecurity Funding Summary*

	2008-2009 Biennium	2010-2011 Biennium		
		Base	Exceptional Item #5	Total LAR
<b>General Revenue</b>	\$5.04 million	\$5.7 million	\$1.6 million	\$7.3 million
<b>Federal Funds</b>	\$500,000	\$135,000*	-	\$135,000*
<b>Other Funds</b>	-	-	-	-
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>\$5.54 million</i></b>	<b><i>\$5.8 million</i></b>	<b><i>\$1.6 million</i></b>	<b><i>\$7.4 million</i></b>

\* Pending federal funds are not included in this amount.