



ABOUT APHIS

Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) is a program within the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). APHIS is a multi-faceted agency with a broad mission; its efforts support the overall purpose of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA): to protect and promote food, agriculture, natural resources and related issues. PPQ's mission is to protect agriculture and natural resources from the risks associated with the entry, establishment, or spread of animal and plant pests and noxious weeds to ensure an abundant, high-quality, and varied food supply. PPQ works with state departments of agriculture and other government agencies to protect America's agricultural and ecological resources as well as its National Plant Protection Official (NPPO) counterparts regarding offshore pest management.

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PPQ Website: www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/
PPQ Subscription Sign up:
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/subscriber/new>

Plant Protection and Quarantine Program grows stakeholder registry by 78% in two months

Situation

Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) is a program office of the **US Department of Agriculture's** (USDA) **Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service** (APHIS). PPQ's mission is to protect agriculture and natural resources from the risks associated with the entry, establishment, or spread of animal and plant pests and noxious weeds to ensure an abundant, high-quality, and varied food supply. PPQ works with other departments and government agencies, including those within the USDA, to protect America's agricultural and ecological resources.

To communicate and increase transparency with stakeholders, PPQ was using a desktop application for capturing stakeholder subscriptions. Unfortunately, the application was disorganized and not user friendly. It provided stakeholders with an overwhelming laundry list of topics that left them unsure of what they were signing up for. In addition, PPQ sought ways to improve employee participation in the content production and distribution process. The job of sending updates to its stakeholders was managed by only one individual. PPQ wanted to empower its program staff and field personnel to begin taking broader responsibility for communicating directly with their respective stakeholders.

PPQ recognized the need to find a more efficient solution. Opportunely, one of the agency's branch directors saw a demo for GovDelivery's Digital Communication Management (DCM) solution and realized PPQ could benefit from using this system.

Solution

In June 2011, PPQ launched GovDelivery Digital Communication Management. PPQ joined seven other USDA agencies using GovDelivery to power its stakeholder communications and outreach. The solution allows the agency to reach people through different communication channels including email and text messages, which enable the flow of important information to those stakeholders without internet access.

With GovDelivery, PPQ is able to customize subscriber questions to find the attributes that define its audience. With this information, PPQ is now able to segment its audience based on organizational affiliation, state, and country and deliver relevant communications to stakeholder groups with commonalities. Such targeted communications can increase stakeholders' engagement with PPQ's mission.

Before the solution was launched, PPQ promoted the system to both internal and external stakeholders in the hopes of building anticipation. The features and benefits of the GovDelivery system were discussed in meetings, published in federal notices and press releases, as well as tweeted, and communicated through electronic newsletter articles.

Once the system was launched, PPQ promoted sign ups by featuring the GovDelivery red envelope on their home page inviting website visitors to, "Join the PPQ Stakeholder Registry". In addition, PPQ has also promoted sign ups at events and tradeshows and is currently looking into promoting the service in agriculture magazines.



SUCCESS STORY

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

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Subscription page for PPQ updates:
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/subscriber/new>

Results

These proactive steps helped to create awareness; PPQ reached 2800 subscribers within 2 months. As a point of comparison, it took the program 9 years to get 3600 subscribers with the previous system. PPQ has also benefited from the opportunity to engage stakeholders that are “finding” them through the interagency links provided by the unique GovDelivery Network. For example, website visitors to the Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Protection (DHS-CBP) are able to subscribe to PPQ content through a cross-promotion feature enabled by GovDelivery. Communication between these two agencies is vital as PPQ is responsible for the rules and regulations while CBP is responsible for enforcement.

PPQ has also noted internal efficiency improvements. GovDelivery has enabled PPQ to increase the number of relevant messages sent to stakeholders each week by dividing the work load over more internal staff. One PPQ staff member believes that this will be the greatest benefit of the system; by involving many different parts of the agency to help with communication efforts, everyone will benefit with more timely, targeted messages. Additionally, sharing responsibility for communicating to stakeholders is expected to empower program staff by providing a clearer understanding of respective stakeholder information needs and interests. This approach will allow content producers to measure the impact of communications while refocusing attention towards topics of greatest value to PPQ's audience.

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