CSG reserves the right to use or publish in other CSG products and services the information provided in this Innovations Awards Program Application. If your agency objects to this policy, please advise us in a separate attachment to your program’s application.

ID # (assigned by CSG): 09-S-18TX

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Texas

Assign Program Category (applicant): Natural Resources - Agriculture (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name: Regulatory Programs, Biosecurity Inspection Program
2. Administering Agency: Texas Department of Agriculture
3. Contact Person (Name and Title): Bryan Black, Assistant Commissioner for Communications
4. Address: 1700 N Congress Ave, Austin, TX 78701
5. Telephone Number: 512-463-7664
6. FAX Number: 1-888-215-5385
7. E-mail Address: bryan.black@TexasAgriculture.gov
8. Web site Address: www.TexasAgriculture.gov
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

The goal of the Biosecurity Inspection Program is to deter the artificial introduction of pests and diseases. This is accomplished through a three-tiered approach: routine road station inspections, 72-hour road station inspections, and market blitz quarantine inspections.

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 2, 2009 to be considered.

The program has been operational since September 2007.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

The program was created as a means to safeguard Texas agriculture by preventing the introduction of exotic pests and diseases. Historical data showed that greater than 17 percent of agricultural and horticultural products entering Texas were noncompliant with Texas quarantine regulations. The goal was to reduce the number of noncompliant shipments entering Texas.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

- Establish routine and 72-hour road stations at strategic locations in Texas, particularly at ports of entry for out-of-state shipments.
- Coordinate inspection activities with the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Texas Animal Health Commission.
- Inspect shipments for prohibited plants/plant products, compliance with quarantine regulations, and the presence/absence of pests/diseases.
- Reject infested shipments and those that are in violation of Texas quarantine regulations.
- Using inspection data collected at road stations, market blitz quarantine inspections are targeted at high-risk areas.
- When violations are found, the inspection forms are submitted to the department’s Enforcement Division for administrative penalty actions.

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

In the past, TDA operated road station inspections for short time intervals such as 2 to 4 hour shifts. With the increase in trade and the number of shipments entering Texas, the new Biosecurity Inspection Program consists of 72-hour road station inspections, routine road station inspections, and market blitz quarantine inspections. The road stations are operated at strategic locations and at optimum times when chances of pests entering Texas through such shipments are at the highest level. Market blitz quarantine inspections enhance efforts to detect noncompliant shipments that may have entered the state without moving through a road station inspection station. Market blitzes use recent or historical road station inspection data to target locations that may be handling quarantined articles of interest. Flea markets, produce distributors, nurseries, landscapers and mass merchant retailers are some of the locations that were inspected in fiscal year 2008. TDA completed 17 percent more market blitz quarantine inspections and 8 percent more hours conducting road station inspections than targeted.

14. What were the program’s start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

The program became operational with the appropriation of $1.3 million from the Texas Legislature. The funding allowed the department to hire twelve additional inspectors and acquire road station supplies, such as computers, safety equipment, and inspection supplies. A contract with The Texas Department of Public Safety was developed to assist with law enforcement at road station inspections.

15. What are the program’s annual operational costs?

$650,000.00

16. How is the program funded?

The program is funded through state appropriated funds.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.

Yes, passage of House Bill 1, General Appropriations Act, Article VI, Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, Rider 25.
18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

The technology that is used to administer this program are: portable computers, blackberries, digital cameras, printed quarantine forms, road station inspection kits, flood lights, flashlights, traffic cones, reflective safety vests, road block signs, training manuals, etc. TDA customized its web-based Timekeeping data management software, for collection and reporting of road station inspection data.

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator’s name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.

Road station inspections did not originate in Texas, however, TDA created a program that fits the needs of the state and the industry, while maximizing the use of available funds.

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

California, Arizona and Florida operate road stations. However, their road stations are at permanent locations, and are operated continuously around the clock. TDA implemented temporary routine and 72-hour road stations, scheduled strategically, to gain maximum benefit of the approved funding as well as to add an element of surprise to those who may try to circumvent a permanently located station. An added layer of protection was the implementation of market blitz quarantine inspections to find any noncompliant shipments that may have entered the state during the time when road stations are not in operation.

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?

Yes, but our goal focuses on a continuous improvement and growth to meet the needs of the state. The growth of the Biosecurity Inspection Program is constant because of the addition of new quarantines and plant regulations. In the future TDA will increase the number of routine and 72-hour road station inspections, destination inspections and market blitz quarantine inspections.

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program’s effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

The majority of pests entering through agriculture commerce can be monitored and prevented before they become established in the state. If exotic pests and diseases enter the state they could cause significant economic and ecological losses affecting the quality of life. For example, citrus greening disease, detected in Florida in 2005, spread to 30 counties by 2008 covering the majority of citrus producing area. USDA prohibited citrus export from Florida to other citrus growing areas, including Texas. Earlier data collected prior to the new Biosecurity Inspection Program indicated a 17 percent non-compliance rate. However, in FY 2008, approximately 5 percent of trucks transporting regulated plant commodities failed inspections. These results suggest that the Biosecurity Inspection Program may be effectively deterring noncompliance with plant quarantine regulations.
23. **How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?**

   The program has grown or changed since its inception in that more inspections have been conducted than anticipated. In FY2008, TDA exceeded the targeted performance by 17 percent.

24. **What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?**

   The resources that it takes to start a program such as this may be difficult to achieve in the short term. But in the long term, protecting the state from detrimental pests and diseases would outweigh the initial cost. The funding is a major limitation other states may face in implementing a Biosecurity Inspection Program.
Various Texas Quarantine Violated during Roadstation Inspections FY 2008

Commodities with Quarantine Violations during Road Station Inspections
FY 2008

Texas Quarantines Violations by Various States

States

- CA
- FL
- GA
- IL
- LA
- MI
- MS
- NY
- SC

1%
19%
11%
1%
1%
2%
1%
1%
11%
24%
3%
10%
27%
24%
12%
2009 Innovations Awards Program
Program Categories and Subcategories

Use these as guidelines to determine the appropriate Program Category for your state’s submission and list that program category on page one of this application. Choose only one.

**Infrastructure and Economic Development**
- Business/Commerce
- Economic Development
- Transportation

**Government Operations**
- Administration
- Elections
- Public Information
- Revenue

**Health & Human Services**
- Aging
- Children & Families
- Health Services
- Housing
- Human Services

**Human Resources/Education**
- Education
- Labor
- Management
- Personnel
- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

**Natural Resources**
- Agriculture
- Energy
- Environment
- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
- Parks & Recreation
- Water Resources

**Public Safety/Corrections**
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Lexington, KY 40578-1910

**Contact:**

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This application is also available at www.csg.org, in the Programs section.

**Deadline: March 2, 2009**