



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 6, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Agriculture have a long-standing and effective partnership spanning many years and many projects. A current program we are working on together is the response to a new invasive pest, the spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*). This plant-feeding insect was first detected in North America in a beautiful wooded area of eastern Pennsylvania in the fall of 2014. Our two agencies, along with residents, municipalities, other state agencies, and universities, recognized the threat of this pest and began work immediately to study and control it.

I am writing to communicate the urgency of need related to this pest and the changes in tactics we now recognize are needed to control it. Quick work by PDA, supported by USDA funding, has limited the spread of this pest in Pennsylvania, but it is increasingly clear the present level of resources is insufficient to contain this pest into the future. In the three short years we have known of the spotted lanternfly's presence in Pennsylvania, we have developed a control strategy unique to this pest, but we are constrained by resources.

As a reflection of the growing need, last fall, the commonwealth's financial request to USDA (for federal fiscal year 2017) increased substantially—from \$1.8 million to \$6 million. The request also included the need for an active local USDA operational presence of similar magnitude. In the end, USDA recognized the increased need and awarded Pennsylvania \$2.8 million – funding for which the commonwealth is grateful. The commonwealth has supplemented this funding by dedicating existing personnel resources valued at no less than \$475,000 in salary and benefit costs over the past three years. This figure does not take into account other direct and indirect costs the commonwealth has incurred.

Recognizing the growing concern among agricultural producers and the public that reside in presently quarantined areas, we continue to believe a need exists for a strong USDA presence on the ground. After another year of watching the insect spread to nearby municipalities, we now estimate that a program with two partners each working with a budget of \$10-12 million, for

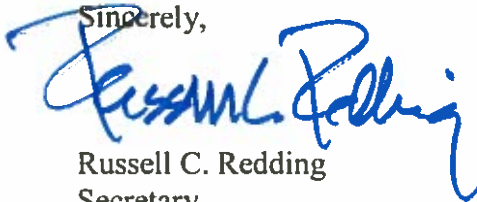
several years, is necessary to turn the tide of the pest spread. Each season we delay dedicating resources of this magnitude toward addressing the problem, the unmet financial need rises.

Absent sufficient financial and human resources, commodities such as hardwoods, grapes, and hops will take large hits in production, driving up the value of crop losses and further impacting our access to trade markets. The pest will feed and cause damage on almost any plant. Spotted lanternfly builds to huge populations and secretes "honeydew," leading to sooty mold growth that smothers plant life beneath trees harboring the pest, changing the face of our forest and causing incredible distress to the residents of impacted areas. Losing this moment for control will result in our agencies, as well as many other stakeholder organizations at the local level, to spend considerably more resources for many years.

In short, we at the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture greatly appreciate USDA's ongoing support in terms of financial contributions and expertise. We also appreciate that our partners at the federal level understand the magnitude of the challenge and the potentially dire consequences of insufficient action.

Thank you for all your consideration of our requests for additional resources and for your continued involvement as we work collaboratively to contain and eradicate the spotted lanternfly. Should you have additional questions, please do contact my office at 717-772-2853.

Sincerely,



Russell C. Redding
Secretary

Cc: Pennsylvania Congressional delegation
Pennsylvania General Assembly Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee chairpersons