

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

Plant Pest and Disease Specialist - Senior

### **POSITION SUMMARY:**

This is a professional position with responsibilities in the plant sciences emphasizing the implementation of and compliance with plant pest regulations, especially in relationship to the export certification program. It functions under general supervision. The position will work closely with the coordinator of the export certification program, the Plant Protection Section Manager, the Pest Survey & Control Section Manager and the Northern Unit Supervisor.

The principal duties of the position are to:

- (1) provide support to the export certification program coordinator for the issuance of phytosanitary certificates, the coordination of the seed field inspection program, and the coordination of the post-entry quarantine program;
- (2) conduct inspections of nursery plants, Christmas trees, logs, seeds, agricultural crops, and other plant products for plant health certification as assigned;
- (3) identify and assess insect pests, diseases and invasive plants on a wide range of ornamental plants, trees, and agricultural crops; and collect regulatory samples for laboratory analysis and diagnosis as needed;
- (4) manage program area compliance activities, including implementing and enforcing plant pest regulations and plant protection laws, particularly pest quarantine, nursery and seed laws;
- (5) provide timely and objective regulatory outreach to the state's agricultural community via GovDelivery, social media, radio, TV and print media.

Duties also include pest risk assessments and plant pest response activities. This position may serve as a department representative on committees and with external organizations, functioning as a technical expert and resource. Interactions with partners and independent researchers may be used to make recommendations to management staff on policies, administrative rules and/or program direction.

### **GOALS AND WORKER ACTIVITIES:**

**50%    GOAL A:            Surveillance and Inspection of Nurseries, Christmas trees, Forest Products, Agricultural Crops and other plant products for Export and Plant Health Certification**

- A.1    Inspect nursery grower and nursery dealer locations to determine apparent freedom of nursery stock from significant plant pests.
- A.2    Inspect Christmas trees for regulated plant pests to certify trees for export; to verify plant regulatory compliance; and to provide pest management recommendations.
- A.3    Inspect firewood producers for annual certification in the voluntary firewood certification program.
- A.4    Collect official seed samples to ensure compliance with the seed law.
- A.5    Perform field or shipping point inspections of logs or lumber, agricultural crops and other plant products for regulated pests, and/or to certify products for export.
- A.6    Enforce the state and federal plant pest quarantine regulations to ensure that regulated industries are in compliance.
- A.7    Issue notices of noncompliance, orders prohibiting sale or movement, pest abatement orders and take other compliance actions to enforce plant regulations.

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- A.8 Respond to the industry and public's requests for information on Bureau programs by correspondence, over the phone and in person.
- A.9 Conduct periodic audits of nurseries participating in the Systems Approach to Nursery Certification (SANC) and other certification programs.

40% **GOAL B:**      **Processing applications, entering data and printing phytosanitary certificates, plant health certificates and invoices; and coordinating the seed field inspection and program.**

- B.1 Process applications for phytosanitary certificates, and plant health certificates for sod, Christmas trees, nursery stock and other regulated commodities to facilitate export.
- B.2 Provide technical assistance to the industry and general public for the shipment of plant products to various countries and states. Interact with the applicants and program coordinators to ensure the certificates are accurate, complete and timely.
- B.3 Coordinate applications with department specialists and managers so administrative procedures and requirements of other states or foreign countries are met.
- B.4 Assure applicant has deposited sufficient funds in PCIT (phytosanitary certificate issuance tracking) account before processing phytosanitary applications.
- B.5 Interacting with corn, soybean and other seed crop producers to assess inspection and testing needs.
- B.6 Assign seed field inspections to bureau staff and invoice seed crop producers.
- B.7 Enter the information into databases to produce queries to assist in writing reports and program management.
- B.8 Maintain files for applications, certificates, inspection reports and invoices.

5% **GOAL C:**      **Perform Plant Regulatory Outreach**

- C.1 Participate in and present plant inspection information at state and federal planning meetings and program evaluations.
- C.2 Represent the department at tradeshow and assist with staffing plant industry bureau tradeshow exhibits.
- C.3 Provide timely and objective regulatory outreach to the state's agricultural community via GovDelivery, social media, radio, TV and print media.
- C.4 Participate in grower associations and agricultural industry meetings on pest management.
- C.5 Collaborate with university researchers on applied plant research investigations and projects.

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**5%     GOAL D:     Technical Projects and Responsibilities**

- D.1     Assist other Bureau program coordinators with projects and the resolution of issues, particularly in informational and educational compliance initiatives for industry.
- D.2     Assist the Bureau in the assessments of post-entry quarantine facility procedures and releases. Coordinate assessments with USDA-APHIS and other federal regulators in the issuance of permits.
- D.3     Assist USDA-APHIS with regulatory inspections of genetically modified organisms once biotechnology regulatory services training is complete.
- D.4     Perform other related duties as assigned by the supervisor.

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED BY THIS POSITION:**

- A.     Considerable working knowledge of the plant sciences, emphasizing a background in the natural sciences including entomology, plant pathology, horticulture or other closely related fields.
- B.     Working knowledge of the identification, life cycles, hosts, distribution and management alternatives of regulatory plant pests and diseases. Emphasis is on regulated forest pests and the economically important pests and pathogens of major ornamental crops.
- C.     Working knowledge of the Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance & Tracking System (PCIT) for finding country requirements for commodities and alerts posted by USDA in order to enter inspection data and issue certificates.
- D.     Considerable working knowledge of tree nursery, greenhouse and farm practices in Wisconsin and their impact on pest management.
- E.     Working familiarity with the principles of plant regulation, including quarantine compliance and enforcement.
- F.     Thorough working knowledge in the field identification of plants including nursery stock, Christmas trees, agronomic, vegetable and other crops.
- G.     Good working knowledge of cultural, biological and chemical control practices used to manage pests and the principals of integrated pest management.
- H.     Strong communications expertise and experience providing education or information through presentations, media, and written materials (e.g., interviews/personal appearances by radio, television or newspaper; public speaking; educational brochure and fact sheet development).
- I.     Well-versed in a variety of computer software packages including word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations. Knowledgeable in electronic communication tools, such as email, text messaging, and video calls. Knowledge of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and electronic field data collection.
- J.     Effective networking and liaison skills with program-related partners (e.g. DNR, USDA-APHIS, tribes, nursery, Christmas tree and forest products industry associations).

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### **Special Requirements:**

- 1) Travel will be required for approximately 40% of this position's duties, with some overnight stays required.
- 2) Possession of a valid driver's license including personal automobile insurance, or the ability to provide one's own transportation for work purposes, is required.
- 3) Ability to walk in rough terrain and work outdoors in potentially inclement and adverse weather conditions, including heat, humidity, rain, wind and cold.