

**Overview of NAPPO RSPM 7**  
**Guidelines for Petition for First Release of Non-Indigenous Phytophagous  
or Phytopathogenic Biological Control Agents**

**Purpose:** Weed biological control programs prevent or manage agricultural and environmental losses by using natural enemies (e.g., predators or pathogens) of weeds to suppress their populations. Before receiving authorization to release a **non-native or imported** biological control agent (BCA) that either feeds on (= phytophagous) or causes disease in (= phytopathogenic) weeds, all potential ecological and economic impacts must be carefully assessed. A petition for the first release of a weed BCA must be submitted to the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of the country of release before its release is approved.

**Contents:** The body of RSPM 7 describes information that should be contained in the petition for 1<sup>st</sup> release of a non-native weed BCA into a NAPPO member country. **Appendix 1** of RSPM 7 contains a standardized petition format.



**Summary of RSPM 7:** The petition for 1<sup>st</sup> release of weed BCAs should include information on:

**i) the purpose of the proposed release**, documenting the need and reasons for choosing the particular BCA; location of the rearing/containment facility; the timing and location of the release; and organizations that will be involved in the release; **ii) the target weed**, including its taxonomy, biology, reproductive potential, and global distribution; vulnerable life stage and plant part to the BCA; economically and ecologically important species related to the target weed present in North America; **iii) the BCA**,

including its taxonomy, identification methods, biology, reproductive potential, and geographic range; history of past use; source of the BCA; methods for eliminating pests and pathogens affecting the BCA; methods for handling the BCA in containment; and other closely related weed genera; **iv) host-specificity testing**, including information that confirms the BCA will only impact the target weed, including laboratory tests and field surveys on closely related plants, non-related plants, rare and endangered species, and economically important plants; **v) environmental and economic impacts** of releasing the BCA, including expected benefits (such as reduced pesticide use and other controls, reduced environmental or production losses); impacts on humans and other vertebrates, direct impacts on target or non-target plants; indirect impacts on organisms that depend on the target plant; direct or indirect impacts on endangered species or the physical environment; and contingency plans to mitigate undesired environmental impacts; **vi) post-release monitoring plan** that tracks establishment and spread of the BCA; target weed and BCA densities and distribution over time; and impacts on non-target species; and **vii) pre-release compliance**, including information on the planned location and timing of the 1<sup>st</sup> release, clearly labelled reference specimens suitable for DNA testing deposited in the national collection of the permitting country.

**Please read RSPM 7** for a more complete description of the guidelines for preparing a petition for the 1<sup>st</sup> release of a non-native BCA of weeds into a NAPPO member country.

Photo by Scott Bauer <https://www.ars.usda.gov/oc/images/photos/oct00/k9080-1/>