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News Release

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NEW YORK ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE ERADICATION PROGRAM ANNOUNCES ITS EFFORTS FOR 2014

WASHINGTON, March 31, 2014 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) together with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets today announced its 2014 plans for eradicating the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB). Currently, there are 109 square miles under regulation in New York, which includes the New York City boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, as well as a portion of Long Island.

Last month the State of New York proposed to amend the ALB quarantine due to a new detection of the insect on Long Island, in areas within Babylon Township. APHIS is working to update federal regulations accordingly. The amended quarantine would add 26 square miles onto the existing 23 square miles regulated area of Nassau/Suffolk County, resulting in a total of 135 square miles under regulation for ALB in the state. The New York City boroughs of Manhattan and Staten Island, as well as Islip, N.Y. on Long Island have all been declared eradicated. Maps showing ALB regulated areas are available online at www.aphis.usda.gov.

“Given the new detection of ALB on Long Island, the eradication program will focus on survey efforts in and around the newly affected area,” states Josie Ryan, APHIS’ national operations manager for the Asian Longhorned Beetle Eradication Program.

Surveys will continue within all areas currently regulated for ALB. Within Babylon Township, surveys will help determine the boundary of the new infestation. Surveys are completed by specially trained federal, state and contracted ground survey crews and tree climbers. Currently, a survey contract exists with Davey Tree Expert Company. Since the beetle was first detected in the state, the program has conducted over 1 million surveys of host trees.

Infested trees will continue to be removed throughout the year as they are detected. To date, 6,381 infested trees and 12,183 high-risk host trees have been removed in New York since the eradication program began in 1996. The program continues to evaluate the use of high-risk host tree removals as needed.

The eradication program will not use pesticide treatment applications this year. The use of treatment applications will be reevaluated annually.

Program staff continues to monitor the regulated area, respond to service calls and conduct training sessions for compliance agreements. The eradication program holds 1,017 compliance agreements for working with host material within regulated areas. Compliance trainings are free-of-charge and available for any businesses or individuals who perform on regulated articles in ALB regulated areas. For more information, please call 1-631-288-1751.

The program continues to work with cooperators to further develop pheromone traps, designed to lure and capture the insect. Trap placements in New York are expected to begin this spring. Additional methods development projects include regulatory treatments for wood and nursery stock, looking at chip size and grinding techniques to deregulate host material, and assessing the use of pesticide treatments in the fall. Research continues with analysis to determine how fast the insect spreads on its own, evaluating the host trees the beetle attacks for preference and range, DNA analysis and behavioral experiments.

APHIS has also determined that it is necessary to add a treatment schedule for ALB in the Plant Protection and Quarantine Treatment Manual. A treatment evaluation document has been prepared that discusses the existing treatment schedule and explains why this change is necessary. The document is available to the public for review and comment until April 11. You can access the “Notice of Availability of a Treatment Evaluation Document for Heat Treatment for Asian Longhorned Beetle” (Docket No. APHIS-2013-0094) online at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2013-0094-0002>.

Members of the public are encouraged to inspect their trees for signs of damage caused by the insect and report any suspicious findings. Firewood and other regulated articles are currently prohibited from leaving the regulated area. For more information about the beetle and program activities, please visit www.aphis.usda.gov or www.AsianLonghornedBeetle.com or call the New York ALB Eradication Program directly at 1-866-265-0301 or 1-866-702-9938.

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