

FOR INFORMATION
DA-2010-55
November 12, 2010

SUBJECT: First U.S. Detection of Red Palm Weevil, *Rhychophorus ferrugineus*, in California

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

On October 15, 2010, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the detection of a dead red palm weevil (RPW), *Rhychophorus ferrugineus*, in a canary island palm tree stump. A local arborist reported the find in a residential area of Laguna Beach, Orange County, California. This is the first detection of RPW in the United States.

APHIS is coordinating with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to determine the source and the extent of any potential infestation. On October 26, CDFA inspectors found a single live adult RPW in a canary palm tree approximately 100 meters away from the original detection in Laguna Beach. Inspectors were alerted to the presence of several cocoons around the tree.

Delimiting surveys around the detection site in Laguna Beach continue and detection and targeted surveys are being implemented in nearby nurseries and other counties. APHIS assembled a technical working group, consisting of subject matter experts to evaluate the current science information and provide recommendations for effective response strategies.

RPW is a large, reddish-brown weevil with a life cycle ranging from 45 to 139 days, depending on temperature. The female weevil lays eggs in wounds, cracks, and crevices from which the legless larvae hatch and burrow into the plant. Adult weevils are predominantly active during the day and are capable of long distance flight (> 900 m) to locate hosts or breeding sites. RPW is a concealed feeding pest that is difficult to detect during early stages of infestation. The feeding of the weevil in the growing points of the palm causes tree death. RPW is known to occur in Africa, Europe, Oceania, North America, and the Caribbean. Its host range includes *Areaceae*, *Poaceae*, and *Agavaceae*, with palms being its primary host.

As per reporting requirements under IPPC standards, this detection of *Rhychophorus ferrugineus* is considered to be transient, actionable, and under surveillance.

For additional information, you may contact Craig Southwick, Western Regional Program Manager, at (970) 494-7578, or Valerie DeFeo, National Program Manager, at (301) 734-3393.

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