



Pest Detection and Management Programs

Plant Protection and Quarantine

Weekly Notice, January 19, 2004

This “Weekly Notice” is prepared by the Pest Detection and Management Programs (PDMP) to communicate recent important events. These notices and other more detailed program information can be found at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ep/reports/>

Emerald Ash Borer – As of November 21, and since July 11, surveyors from the three EAB survey zone offices have logged 38 data points, examined more than 180,000 trees, covering roughly 480,000 acres (750 square miles) of southeast Michigan. 152 positives have been recorded outside the core zone, including 55 that are outside the original six-county quarantine.

Statewide survey efforts by Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and USDA inspectors have included 1138 inspections in 82 of 83 Michigan counties. These inspections have identified 41 positives outside the core zone, 28 positives outside the original six-county quarantine, and 8 positives outside the 13-county quarantine.

Six wood-fired power plants located in the Lower Peninsula have been targeted by the MDA for inspection. These power plants were identified as potential recipients of ash wood chips from the EAB quarantine, and will be checked annually by MDA, and more frequently by USDA. MDA and USDA are also implementing regulatory contacts with firewood dealers in the seven new quarantined counties, and also will inspect premises and discuss the EAB quarantine with owners of private campgrounds (1,100 in our database) over the winter. Nursery tracebacks continue.

No new detections were made as of the week of December 15, 2003; however trace backs continue to lead to new locations of nursery stock moved outside the quarantine area. PPQ Officers Ken Witt, Sarah Clore, and Brian Sullivan completed work on a standard set of questions for nurseries and other possible originators of out of state ash movement. These interview questions will ensure that tracing shipments can be carried out efficiently. Destruction of firewood and dead trees is an ongoing activity.

The “Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)” was signed last week and the final copy of the Michigan Environmental Assessment is expected soon.

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Asian longhorned beetle - The USDA Interagency Research Forum on Invasive Species was held in Annapolis, MD the week of January 12, 2004. The Asian Longhorned Beetle Program Directors were represented at that meeting. Presentations on Research and Program accomplishments were given Thursday afternoon January 15th. The Program Directors met with the various research scientists from ARS, APHIS, FS, and Universities to target the research studies for the 2004 program year.

Work is under way with the IL State Department of Agriculture to de-regulate two of the ALB satellite infestations in Illinois - the infested areas of Addison and Summit. Our second year of negative survey was completed in 2003 at both of these locations. Per ALB Eradication Protocols, after two years of negative survey an area may be considered for de-regulation and after four years of negative survey an area may be considered eradicated.

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***Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 detected in Nursery** - In late December 2003 and early January 2004 APHIS made positive confirmations of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 in two varieties of wilted geraniums at a New York State nursery. One of the infected varieties was direct-shipped to the nursery from a producer in Guatemala and another infected variety was shipped to the nursery from a U.S. rooting station that received its stock from Guatemala. APHIS identified three other U.S. rooting facilities that received suspect varieties. More than 439 nurseries received suspect varieties directly from the producer or through rooting stations. Three of the more than 30 geranium varieties from the producer are considered suspect at this time.



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APHIS placed hold orders on geraniums at the New York nursery and the four U.S. rooting stations. In cooperation with State Departments of Agriculture, APHIS is issuing Emergency Action Notifications to nurseries that received one of the three Americana varieties of geraniums from Guatemala- Bright Red, Coral, or Cherry Rose II, and is placing additional holds on facilities identified through traces forward.

The producer voluntarily quarantined its Guatemala greenhouses, and suspended shipments of geranium cuttings. APHIS notified Guatemala on January 6, 2004, that further importations of geranium cuttings from the suspect facility will be prohibited until further notice.

On January 8, 2004, we distributed a draft version of our New Pest Response Guidelines (the "Action Plan") to all PPQ State Plant Health Directors (SPHDs) and State Plant Regulatory Officials (SPROs) for review and comments. On January 9, we held a national conference call with the SPHDs and SPROs to discuss the draft and to address their question and concerns about this action.

We released the final version of the *Ralstonia* action plan, it is available at:
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ep/ralstonia/ralstoniaactionplanv4web.pdf>.

We temporarily suspended the destruction of plants while PPQ staff visited the Guatemala facility during the week of January 12 to evaluate the facility's production systems and testing procedures and to develop a water effluent sampling procedure; however, PPQ continued to place holds on nurseries.

Dave Kaplan, CPHST, and Bill Thomas, PIM, visited Guatemala on January 13-15, 2004, and found wilted plants among two of the three suspect varieties (Americana Bright Red and Americana Cherry Rose II) at several locations in one greenhouse. They confirmed the presence of *Ralstonia* in samples from these plants with serologically-based tests. They also confirmed *Ralstonia* in effluent water from the third suspect

variety, Americana Coral, that was not expressing symptoms of wilt at the time.

Based partly on the findings in Guatemala, we reinstated the destruction order for the three suspect varieties and other potentially exposed plants on January 16. These actions are proceeding.

Nationally, 41 states have a total of 458 suspect facilities, 297 facilities are being held, 16 control actions are complete, 15 facilities have been released and more than 400,000 cuttings or plants have been destroyed.

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Pest Detection - Several pest risk assessments (PRA) for plant pests on the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) list are now posted on the PPQ website at:
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ep/pestdetection/pestlist.html>

The PRA's include information sections on biology of the pest, maps with predicted distribution within the U.S., hosts and survey methodology to name a few. The PRA's were completed by the Univ. of Minnesota in conjunction with the staff at the Centers for Plant Health, Science and Technology (CPHST) in Raleigh, NC.

Also on the PPQ Pest Detection website is the Volunteer Guidebook in its draft form. After the National CAPS Meeting in December, 2003, many cooperators and State Plant Health Directors (SPHD's) asked for more guidance on how to initiate surveys using volunteers. Therefore, this information was placed on the website for all to use. The draft guidelines include information and examples of position descriptions, service agreements and exit interviews. The URL for this site is:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ep/pestdetection/volunteer_guidebook14-5.pdf

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Cactus Moth, *Cactoblastis cactorum* - A meeting organized by PDMP and CPHST was held in Miami December 9-10 to discuss the Cactus moth, *Cactoblastis cactorum*, currently spreading from Florida westward along the Gulf Coast on its hosts, *Opuntia* spp. The meeting included presentations by entomologists from APHIS, ARS, Florida universities, South Africa's Plant Protection Research Institute, and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Presentations also included a preliminary economic analysis by CPHST and considerable concerns expressed by Mexico's SAGARPA and from the conservation community including ecologists the Department of Interior, the National Institute of Invasive Species Science (CSU), The Nature Conservancy and USGS' NatureServe. Participation also included CPHST, the PPQ regions and states of Florida and Mississippi, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, National Wildlife Refuge system, the National Park Service, and the Cactus and Succulent Society of America. Discussions included developing an economic/environmental impact analysis document, better identification keys for related species, CAPS, including volunteer surveys in the leading edge states, examination of regulatory issues, and control strategies. While biological control and chemical control may show promise in limited ways, each has major obstacles to their consideration as viable options without considerably more research. With no specific funding, the Agriculture Research Service has done significant work toward developing a pheromone, rearing, and sterile insect techniques, the area that shows the most promise for containing the pest. More funding is needed to demonstrate this in the short term. A meeting summary and conclusions will be forthcoming. APHIS' position includes the development of options to stop or slow the spread of *Cactoblastis cactorum* into the Southwestern US and Mexico.

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Sudden oak death - Europe reports *Phytophthora ramorum* in three new species of trees: *Quercus ilex*, *Fagus sylvatica*, and *Aesculus hippocastanum*

The United Kingdom announced detections of *P. ramorum* (Pr) in three new species of trees, *Quercus ilex*, *Fagus sylvatica*, and *Aesculus hippocastanum*. These are commonly known as the holm or holly oak, European beech, and horse chestnut. All of these were associated with heavily infected Rhododendron. The oak and beech both demonstrated oozing from the trunk, a common symptom in some tree types infected with Pr.

This is a significant development following last month's report of the first true tree species (northern and southern red oaks) found infected in Europe. Also significant is that oak, beech and horse chestnut were shown to be highly susceptible in laboratory tests and were on the "watch lists" in these countries.

Current Emergency Regulations on nursery stock and established wood regulations restrict imports from Europe of hosts.

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Boll Weevil Eradication - Significant progress has been made this year in nearly every program area. In the post-eradication areas of the Southeast, where about 250,000 pheromone traps have been checked on over 3 million acres of cotton, only 1 boll weevil was detected in 2003. This weevil was found in August near Mobile, Alabama. No other weevils were found, although trap density was increased following the initial detection. This means that just 1 boll weevil was detected in a 7-state area, stretching from the Mississippi-Alabama line, all the way to Richmond, Virginia.

In the Southwest, no weevils were detected during the 2003 season on 1.3 million acres from Las Cruces, New Mexico to San Jose, California.

Kansas remains weevil-free, along with much of Oklahoma and large portions of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi. Many states are reporting record yields, and the price of cotton is rebounding. Only 400,000 acres remain outside the program, and nationwide eradication is expected by 2007.



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Pink Bollworm Eradication - Program cooperators from the U.S. and Mexico met recently in El Paso, Texas, and Mazatlan, Mexico, to evaluate program progress. In the El Paso/Trans Pecos zone, the south central New Mexico zone, and the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, pink bollworm populations were reduced by more than 90 percent in 2003. Program managers and grower leaders decided to continue the successful first phase of the program into 2004. They are hopeful that an increase in funding for 2005 will allow sterile moths to be reared and released in these areas, thereby moving the program to a successful conclusion, and enabling it to expand westward into Arizona and southern California.

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