

Questions and Answers: Revised Ohio Environmental Assessment for the Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program in Clermont County

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is issuing a revised environmental assessment (EA) for proposed actions to contain and eradicate the invasive Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) from Clermont County, OH. On May 9, 2012, APHIS issued an EA on this topic that was made available to the public for a 60-day comment period, which closed on July 9, 2012. After considering the comments received, APHIS decided to revise the EA and is making it available to the public for comment.

Q. How does the revised EA differ from the May 2012 version?

A. The revised EA reflects important changes made to the May 2012 version, including the identification of a preferred alternative and a more detailed explanation of that alternative. APHIS has also incorporated responses to public comments received on the May 2012 EA.

Q. What preferred alternative has APHIS identified in the revised EA?

A. APHIS has identified alternative D—infested host removal and combination of removal or imidacloprid treatment of high-risk hosts—as the preferred alternative in the revised EA. This alternative does not prescribe that all high-risk host trees must be treated or removed within a certain radius of a known infested tree; rather, it allows flexibility between the utilization of treatment applications and high-risk host removals. It is important to note that under this alternative, if landowner consent is not granted for the recommended method of treatment or recommended removal of high-risk hosts, then additional survey work would continue and host trees would be removed if they are subsequently identified as infested.

Q. Why isn't a final determination being issued for the EA released in May?

A. APHIS will still make a final determination regarding the potential environmental impacts of the proposed eradication activities. However, after considering the comments received on the EA released in May, APHIS wants to provide the public with more information before issuing a final determination.

Q. What does the revised EA do?

A. The revised EA further evaluates whether the proposed alternatives for the ALB Cooperative Eradication Program in Clermont County, OH, could affect the quality of the environment. It also allows the public to submit additional comments on the proposed alternatives relative to possible environmental impacts, giving them an opportunity to be involved in the decisionmaking process.

Q. What doesn't the revised EA do?

A. This revised EA does *not* make a decision on which alternative APHIS and its State partners will pursue in their ALB eradication efforts. This decision cannot be made until after APHIS and its State partners have received and considered all public comments on the revised assessment.

Q. Who did APHIS consult as part of the revised EA process?

A. APHIS consulted individuals within its own programs and services, as well as individuals at the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio State University, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ohio Historical Society, Clermont County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

Q. Where can I obtain copies of the revised EA?

A. You can access the document through the APHIS Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/ea/alb.shtml.

You can also obtain copies by contacting Robyn Rose via email at robyn.i.rose@aphis.usda.gov or postal mail at: USDA/APHIS/PPQ, ALB Eradication Program, 4700 River Road, Unit 137, Riverdale, MD 20737. Your request should refer to the document entitled "Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program in Clermont County, Ohio, Revised Environmental Assessment, January 2013."

In addition, copies are available through the Ohio ALB Cooperative Eradication Program office, located at 1761-A State Route 125, Amelia, OH 45102.

Q. How do I submit comments on the revised EA?

A. Anyone wishing to comment on the document should send their remarks to Robyn Rose at the email or mailing address noted above. Individuals are encouraged to participate in the decisionmaking process by submitting comments. Any comments received will be considered and may result in changes to the proposed activities.

Q. How long do I have to review and comment on the proposed actions?

A. The comment period is open until February 16, 2013.

Q. Will I receive a reply back if I submit comments?

A. APHIS will address all comments at the close of the comment period and make its final determination available on the APHIS Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/ea/alb.shtml.

Q. What will happen after the comment period closes?

A. Once all comments are received and considered, APHIS and its State partners can make a determination regarding the potential environmental impacts of the proposed eradication activities, which will be made available on the APHIS Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/ea/alb.shtml.

Q. Where can I go for more information?

A. For additional information about this topic and other ALB issues, visit www.BattleBusters.info, or call the Ohio ALB Cooperative Eradication Program office at (513) 381-7180. You can also find out more about APHIS and its work, including general ALB program information, by visiting the agency's homepage at www.aphis.usda.gov.

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