

Finding of No Significant Impact
Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program Use of Ivermectin Corn
Environmental Assessment
January 2017

In November 2016, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) analyzing the potential environmental consequences of treating white-tailed deer with ivermectin to control tick vectors of cattle fever in Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Wells, Kinney, Maverick, Starr, Val Verde, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata counties in South Texas. The EA that analyzed the potential impacts of this program is incorporated by reference in this document and is available on the APHIS Veterinary Services Tick Disease Information website or from:

USDA-APHIS-Veterinary Services
Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program
2150 Centre Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80526

The November 2016 EA analyzed the alternatives of (1) continuing the current cattle fever tick eradication efforts in South Texas with no additional efforts to minimize the spread of ticks by white-tailed deer (no action), and (2) strategically placing ivermectin-treated corn in feeders on private and public lands in Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Wells, Kinney, Maverick, Starr, Val Verde, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata counties (preferred alternative). On November 30, 2016, APHIS and the Texas Animal Health Commission confirmed the presence of cattle fever ticks in Live Oak County. As a result of this confirmation, APHIS is also proposing to place ivermectin-treated corn in Live Oak County. APHIS reviewed the proposal and determined that it does not raise any additional concerns that were not analyzed in the November 2016 EA.

APHIS completed consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), which concurred on effects determinations for listed species that could occur in proximity to ivermectin-treated corn feeders. APHIS determined that with the implementation of mitigation measures for some species, the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to affect the black-capped vireo (*Vireo atricapilla*), golden-cheeked warbler (*Setophaga chrysoparia*), Devils River minnow (*Dionda diaboli*) and its critical habitat, ashy dogweed (*Thymophylla tephroleuca*), black lace cactus (*Echinocereus rechenbachii* var. *albertii*), least tern (*Sternula antillarum*), South Texas ambrosia (*Ambrosia cheiranthifolia*), star cactus (*Astrophytum asterias*), Texas ayenia (*Ayenia limitaris*), Texas snowbells (*Styrax platanifolius* subsp. *texanus*), Tobusch fishhook cactus (*Sclerocactus brevihamatus* subsp. *tobuschii*), Walker's manioc (*Manihot walkerae*), and Zapata bladderpod (*Lesquerella thamnophila*).

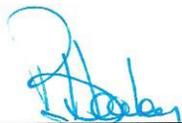
APHIS also determined that the proposed action may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the Gulf Coast jaguarondi (*Puma yagouaroundi cacomitli*), ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*), northern aplomado falcon (*Falco femoralis septentrionalis*), and whooping crane (*Grus americana*). FWS issued a biological opinion in January 2017 indicating that the proposed use of ivermectin-treated corn in feeding stations will not likely jeopardize the continued existence of these species. FWS included terms and conditions in the biological opinion outlining APHIS'

reporting and monitoring requirements.

There are no disproportionate adverse impacts associated with the proposed action to minorities, low-income populations, or children, in accordance with Executive Order 12898, "*Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations*" and Executive Order 13045 "*Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks*."

The availability of the EA was announced in a South Texas newspaper and via the APHIS Stakeholder Registry for a 30-day public comment period that ended on December 27, 2016. Nine comments were received; a summary of and responses to the comments is included as an appendix to the EA.

I find that the implementation of the proposed program will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. I have considered and based my finding of no significant impact on the analysis contained within the EA. I have not found evidence of significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed program; therefore, I find that no additional environmental documentation needs to be prepared and the program may proceed.



Dr. Burke L. Healey
Acting Associate Deputy Administrator
Surveillance, Preparedness, and Response Services
Veterinary Services
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service



Date