



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737-1232 • Voice (301) 851-4100 • Web: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>

Contact:
Rhonda Santos (508) 852-8044
Lyndsay Cole (970) 494-7410

Massachusetts Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program Determines Next Steps for Worcester County

WASHINGTON, April 20, 2012--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in conjunction with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) today announced next steps in eradicating the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) infestation from Worcester County, Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts ALB Cooperative Eradication Program will step up its efforts in 2012 to delimit the infestation of ALB in Worcester County, and will focus its eradication strategies on four critical operations: delimiting surveys, removal of infested trees, regulatory activities and methods development to enhance program operations.

Since Aug. 5, 2008 when the invasive beetle was first detected in the state, the eradication program has surveyed over 2 million host trees within Worcester County while the regulated area has grown from 17 square miles to the current 110 square miles. The program is still working to delimit the infested area.

“The priority is to complete delimitation as soon as possible by focusing efforts on survey,” said Christine Markham, National Director for the APHIS ALB Eradication Program. “Surveys will determine the full extent of the central Massachusetts infestation and the information gained will help determine what additional eradication control strategies will be used to fight the infestation.”

Ground inspection of host trees is completed by specially trained federal, state and contracted survey crews. Ground surveyors and professional aerial surveyors are working to identify the edges of the infestation. The program will also work with entomologists and foresters from APHIS, DCR, USDA's Forest Service and Pennsylvania State University to further develop pheromone traps, designed to lure and capture the insect. Trap placements are expected to begin in June.

Given the priority to complete delimiting surveys, the eradication program will not focus on the use of chemical treatment applications in Worcester County this year. It is critical that the boundaries of the infestation are identified in order to prevent the infestation from spreading beyond the current area. The use of treatment applications will be reevaluated in 2013.

Infested trees will continue to be removed throughout the year as they are detected. To date, 20,448 infested trees and 10,250 high-risk host trees have been removed from within the regulated area. The removal of infested trees will continue to reduce beetle populations and contribute towards the eradication of the pest.

The program is facilitating several methods development projects. One key study involves the use of detector dogs, which are trained to recognize the scent of the beetle versus other forest pests. Additional studies currently under development include regulatory treatments for wood and nursery stock, and fall treatment applications.

Program staff continues to monitor the regulated area, respond to service calls and conduct training sessions for compliance agreements. The eradication program holds compliance agreements with 2,957 individuals working within the regulated area. These efforts are designed to limit the spread of the invasive pest and facilitate its eradication from within Massachusetts, as well as to prevent its spread to other states.

The mission of the eradication program is to help save trees and to eradicate the invasive pest from the state. The eradication program continues to work with partners to improve science-based eradication protocols.

For information about the beetle and program activities, please contact the Massachusetts ALB Cooperative Eradication program at 508-852-8090 or toll-free at 1-866-702-9938. Log on to www.aphis.usda.gov or <http://massnrc.org/pests/alb> or visit www.beetlebusters.info for more information about ALB, including pictures and where to report a suspected beetle.

The Massachusetts ALB cooperative eradication program is comprised of APHIS, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, the city of Worcester, the towns of Holden, West Boylston, Boylston, Shrewsbury and Auburn, the city of Boston, and the town of Brookline.

With Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, APHIS works tirelessly to create and sustain opportunities for America's farmers, ranchers and producers. Each day, APHIS promotes U.S. agricultural health, regulates genetically engineered organisms, administers the Animal Welfare Act, and carries out wildlife damage management activities, all to safeguard the nation's agriculture, fishing and forestry industries. In the event that a pest or disease of concern is detected, APHIS implements emergency protocols and partners with affected states and other countries to quickly manage or eradicate the outbreak. To promote the health of U.S. agriculture in the international trade arena, APHIS develops and advances science-based standards with trading partners to ensure America's agricultural exports, valued at more than \$137 billion annually, are protected from unjustified restrictions.

#

Note to Reporters: USDA news releases, program announcements and media advisories are available on the Internet and through Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds. Go to the APHIS news release page at www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom and click on the RSS feed link.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).