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News Release

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Federal and State Officials Announce Tree Survey Efforts in Babylon Township, New York Due to the Discovery of Asian Longhorned Beetle

Area Residents Are Encouraged to Check Their Trees and Report Any Signs of ALB

WASHINGTON, September, 12, 2013 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) announce that surveys are under way in several neighborhoods located in the northern portion of Babylon Township in Long Island, N.Y. to determine the scope of an Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) infestation in the area.

An alert homeowner reported a suspicious insect to State officials by providing a photograph and video clip of the live insect on their property. APHIS confirmed the insect was ALB. This is the first detection of the invasive pest outside the existing Suffolk County regulated area.

“The tree surveys will help us determine the extent of the infestation in this area,” said Josie Ryan, APHIS’ national operations manager for the Asian Longhorned Beetle Eradication Program. “We continue to work closely with our state and local counterparts to eradicate this destructive pest, and we ask that Babylon Township residents check their trees and report any suspicious tree damage.”

To date, 69 infested trees have been identified. Three infested trees and one high risk tree located along Wellwood Avenue have been removed. The remaining infested trees located on the grounds of St. Charles/Resurrection Cemeteries, as well as in and around Republic Airport will be removed in the coming weeks.

The ALB eradication program is proceeding with intensive property-by-property tree survey inspections. Inspections are currently taking place north of the Southern State Parkway to the Long Island Rail Road Ronkonkoma Branch, as well as east to west between the Straight Path / Little East Neck Rd. and State Route 110 (Broad Hollow Road) around areas where the infested trees have been found. Crews will use ground

surveyors and specially trained tree climbers to inspect host tree species that are susceptible to ALB for signs of the wood-boring beetle. The inspection area may soon increase to include contiguous locations in the eastern portion of the Town of Oyster Bay in Nassau County and contiguous locations in the Town of Huntington in Suffolk County.

Pheromone traps are being placed in the neighborhoods to aid in early detection. So far, 23 traps have been placed in the canopies of host trees. Although traps are part of ongoing research, the traps have caught beetles in Massachusetts and Ohio, and additional infested trees have been found after surveying near areas where traps were placed.

Program representatives are speaking with homeowners to obtain history on any tree removals or tree care companies working in the area, and they are also visiting establishments that routinely handle host tree material or imported freight from China. These visits will help the program to trace the origins of the infestation.

First discovered in the United States in Brooklyn, N.Y. in 1996, Asian longhorned beetle attacks thirteen types of trees including maple, willow, horse chestnut, birch, and elm. Adults are usually large, distinctive-looking insects that are 1- to 1-1/2 inches long, not including antennae. Their white-banded antennae can be as long as the body itself for females and twice the body length for males.

Signs of infestation may include perfectly round exit holes (about 3/8 to 1/2 inch in diameter) made by adult beetles when they emerge from trees; pockmarks on tree trunks and branches where female beetles deposit eggs; frass (wood shavings and coarse saw dust) produced by larval feeding and tunneling; early fall coloration of leaves or dead branches, and running sap produced by the tree at the egg laying sites, or in response to larval tunneling.

The most important thing you can do to protect your trees is to check them regularly and encourage others to do so, too. Early detection is crucial in the fight against this invasive pest. Residents are encouraged to check their trees, report any sightings of the beetle or signs of damage that it causes, or notify the program if any trees or tree debris has been moved from their properties.

To report signs or symptoms of ALB, please call the New York ALB Eradication Program toll free at (866) 265-0301 or 877-STOP-ALB, or report online at www.asianlonghornedbeetle.com.

For more information, please visit www.aphis.usda.gov and www.agriculture.ny.gov, or call the ALB toll free hotline at 1-866-702-9938.

The ALB cooperative eradication program in New York is comprised of USDA APHIS, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

USDA has made a concerted effort to deliver results for the American people, even as USDA implements sequestration – the across-the-board budget reductions mandated under terms of the Budget Control Act. USDA has already undertaken historic efforts since 2009 to save more than \$828 million in taxpayer funds through targeted, common-sense budget reductions. These reductions have put USDA in a better position to carry out its mission, while implementing sequester budget reductions in a fair manner that causes as little disruption as possible.

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