

**Amended Finding of No Significant Impact
Mexican Fruit Fly and West Indian Fruit Fly Cooperative Eradication Program
Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas
Environmental Assessment
March 2014**

In February 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) analyzing alternatives for control of an outbreak of the Mexican fruit fly, *Anastrepha ludens* (Loew), an exotic agricultural pest detected in two counties of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV), Texas. In October 2000, APHIS prepared an EA analyzing alternatives for control of an outbreak of the West Indian fruit fly (WIFF or Antillean fruit fly), *Anastrepha obliqua* (Macquart), an exotic agricultural pest detected in Cameron County in the LRGV, Texas.

This amended Finding of No Significant Impact was prepared to include discussion of the potential impacts of a new LRGV WIFF program on the human environment, in conjunction with the existing LRGV Mexfly program. The two EAs are incorporated by reference into this document (APHIS, 2014a and 2000) and are available from:

USDA-APHIS-PPQ
State Plant Health Director
903 San Jacinto Boulevard, Suite 270
Austin, TX 78701

and USDA-APHIS-PPQ
Center for Plant Health Science & Technology
1730 Varsity Drive, Suite 400
Raleigh, NC 27606

WIFF is an important pest primarily of tropical fruit and it is found in Central and South America, the West Indies and nearby islands. WIFF was first discovered on the U.S. mainland in 1930, in the State of Florida. An extensive eradication program was undertaken; there has been no confirmed evidence of WIFF presence in Florida since 1935 (UFL, 2012). WIFF is occasionally detected in southern Texas; in 2000 a quarantine for WIFF was established in Cameron County; eradication was declared and the quarantine lifted in 2001 (TDA, n.d.). On March 5, 2014, APHIS detected a WIFF larva in a location of Weslaco, Texas; this evidence of a breeding WIFF population resulted in APHIS involvement in a cooperative eradication program with the Texas Department of Agriculture. The proposed WIFF program area overlaps the existing Mexfly eradication program area (APHIS, 2014b).

The proposed program for WIFF eradication in the LRGV follows the same trapping and monitoring protocols and applies the same chemical treatments as the current Mexfly program in the LRGV. The program does not expect any additional chemical treatments beyond those used in the Mexfly program. Only four aspects are changed. First, it is a different species of fruit fly. Secondly, there is no Sterile Insect technique currently available for this new species. Thirdly, neither the unregulated citrus industry nor APHIS will treat commercial groves because commercial citrus is not considered a pathway for WIFF. Lastly, the Weslaco program area boundaries are now based on both Mexfly and WIFF detections (APHIS, 2014c and 2000; Nash, personal comm.). As a result, synergistic and cumulative impacts to the human environment are not expected. See figures 1 and 2 for maps of the program areas for Mexfly and WIFF in the LRGV.

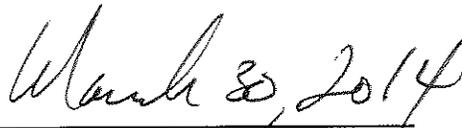
The EAs for the Mexfly and WIFF programs analyzed the alternatives of (1) no action, (2) quarantine and commodity certification, and (3) eradication. Each of these alternatives was determined to have potential environmental consequences. APHIS selected (3) eradication using an integrated pest management approach for the proposed program because of its capability to achieve eradication in a way that also reduces the magnitude of those potential environmental consequences.

APHIS completed a programmatic consultation for the Mexfly program with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in Corpus Christi, Texas. APHIS reviewed the program area and determined the proposed action will have no effect on any listed species or critical habitat because they do not occur within the program area. If the program area expands, or a new species or critical habitat becomes listed and may occur in the program area, then APHIS will revisit this determination and consult with the appropriate agency, as needed. In addition, implementation of the preferred alternative is not expected to have any adverse effect on migratory birds or their flight corridors, or other nontarget species in the program area.

I find that implementation of the proposed program will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. I considered and based my finding of no significant impact on the quantitative and qualitative risk assessments of the proposed pesticides, the analysis in the referenced EA, and on my review of the program's operational characteristics. In addition, I find the impacts to the human environment (including low-income and minority populations, children, and Tribal, cultural, and historical resources) meet applicable consultation requirements. Lastly, because I have not found evidence of significant environmental impacts associated with this proposed program, I further find that an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared and the program may proceed.

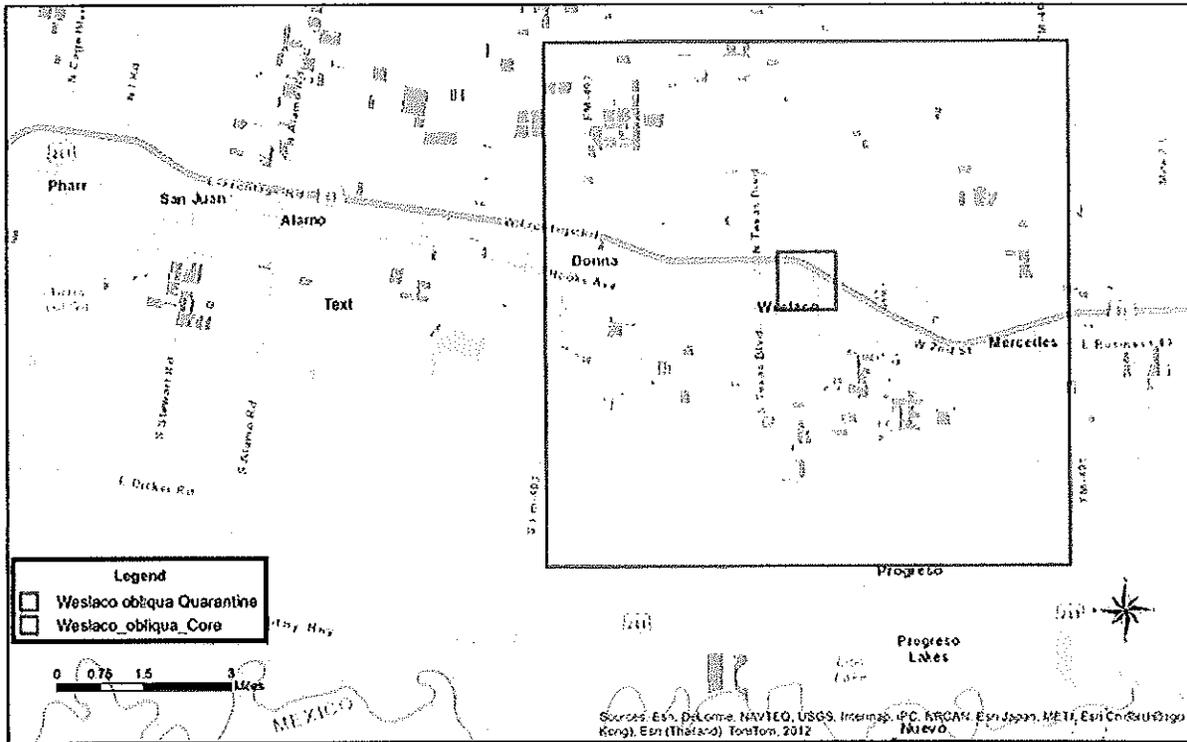


Stuart W. Kuehn
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Plant Protection and Quarantine
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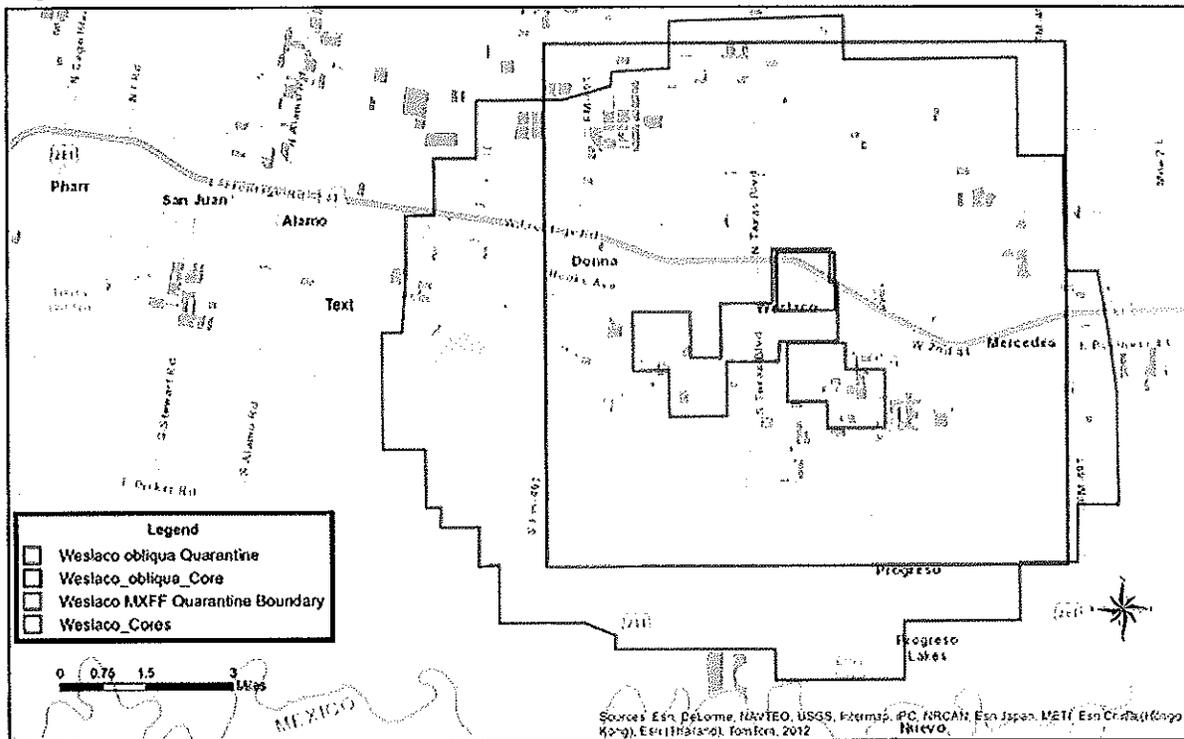
Date

Figure 1. Program area for WIFF in the LRGV, Texas—March 24, 2014.



Source: USDA APHIS PPQ

Figure 2. Weslaco, TX fruit fly program areas—March 2014.



Source: USDA APHIS PPQ