

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

The West Indian fruit fly (WIFF or Antillean fruit fly), *Anastrepha obliqua* (Macquart), is an exotic agricultural pest that attacks numerous fruit and nut and legume species. WIFF is found throughout the Caribbean and in Latin America. It is the most abundant species of *Anastrepha* in the West Indies and Panama. WIFF is a major pest of mangoes in most tropical countries. 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, threatening tropical fruit cultivation and other potential host plants; when necessary, quarantines are established until WIFF eradication is confirmed.

In October 2000, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) analyzing alternatives for control of a WIFF infestation detected in Cameron County, a region of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) in Texas. In February 2014, APHIS prepared an EA analyzing alternatives for control of an outbreak of the Mexican fruit fly, *Anastrepha ludens* (Loew)(Mexfly), an exotic agricultural pest detected in multiple counties of the LRGV.

On March 5, 2014, a WIFF larva was detected in a Mexfly program trap, located in the Hidalgo County region of the LRGV. This evidence of a breeding WIFF population resulted in APHIS involvement in a cooperative eradication program with the Texas Department of Agriculture. The Hidalgo WIFF program area was found to be coextensive with the active Mexfly program area. An amended Finding of No Significant Impact was prepared to include discussion of the potential impacts of the proposed WIFF program on the human environment, in conjunction with the existing LRGV Mexfly program. The two EAs and the amended FONSI are incorporated by reference into this document (APHIS, 2014a, 2014b, 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

On August 12, 2014, a new WIFF detection was confirmed in Cameron County, Texas: one mated female fly, recovered from a McPhail trap in a residential grapefruit tree. This evidence of another breeding WIFF population has triggered APHIS involvement in a new cooperative eradication program with the Texas Department of Agriculture. No commercial treatments are planned at this time, as no WIFF hosts are grown commercially within ten miles of the regulated area (APHIS, 2014c). See figure 1 for a map of the Cameron program core and quarantine boundary.

The Hidalgo WIFF program that began in March 2014 has completed its final life cycle, and the coextensive Hidalgo Mexfly quarantine is expected to end on August 25, 2014 (Nash, pers. comm.). The last WIFF quarantine to take place in Cameron County occurred in 2000; eradication was declared and the quarantine lifted in 2001 (TOA, n.d.). The Cameron WIFF program area is 31.6 miles away from the Hidalgo WIFF program boundary and coextends with the Brownsville region of the LRGV Mexfly program area. See figure 2 for a map of the active program areas for Mexfly and WIFF in the LRGV.

The new program for WIFF eradication in Cameron County follows the same treatment, trapping and monitoring protocols as the existing LRGV Mexfly program and the existing Hidalgo WIFF program. The new WIFF program will not employ any different or additional chemical treatments (Nash, pers. comm.).

No synergistic and cumulative impacts to the human environment are expected to result from implementation of the preferred alternative. APHIS has identified five aspects of the LRGV WIFF program that differ from the LRGV Mexfly program (Nash, personal comm.; APHIS, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c and 2000):

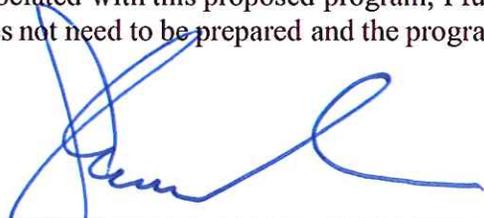
- WIFF is a different species of fruit fly.
- There is no sterile insect technique currently available for WIFF.
- Neither the unregulated citrus industry nor APHIS will treat commercial groves, because commercial citrus is not considered a pathway for WIFF.
- The Hidalgo and Cameron WIFF program areas are not currently coextensive; if the areas were to join there might be additional survey trapping, but no corresponding increase in chemical treatments.
- The proposed Cameron WIFF program is designed to harmonize with active Mexfly and WIFF programs in the LRGV; a unified plan of operation is expected to be effective for the eradication of infestations of both species.

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 has selected (3) eradication using an integrated pest management approach as the preferred alternative for the proposed WIFF program, because of its capability to achieve eradication in a way that also reduces the magnitude of those potential environmental consequences.

APHIS prepared a programmatic biological assessment for program activities in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties that was submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in 2008, and received a concurrence letter dated July 31, 2008. APHIS updates this programmatic consultation yearly to include any new federally listed species or designated critical habitat in the three counties. APHIS contacted the FWS, Ecological Services Field Office in Corpus Christi, Texas regarding the proposed program area. FWS reviewed the program area and indicated that no federally listed species or critical habitat occur in the area. Therefore, APHIS determined that the proposed action will have no effect on any federally listed species or critical habitat. 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.

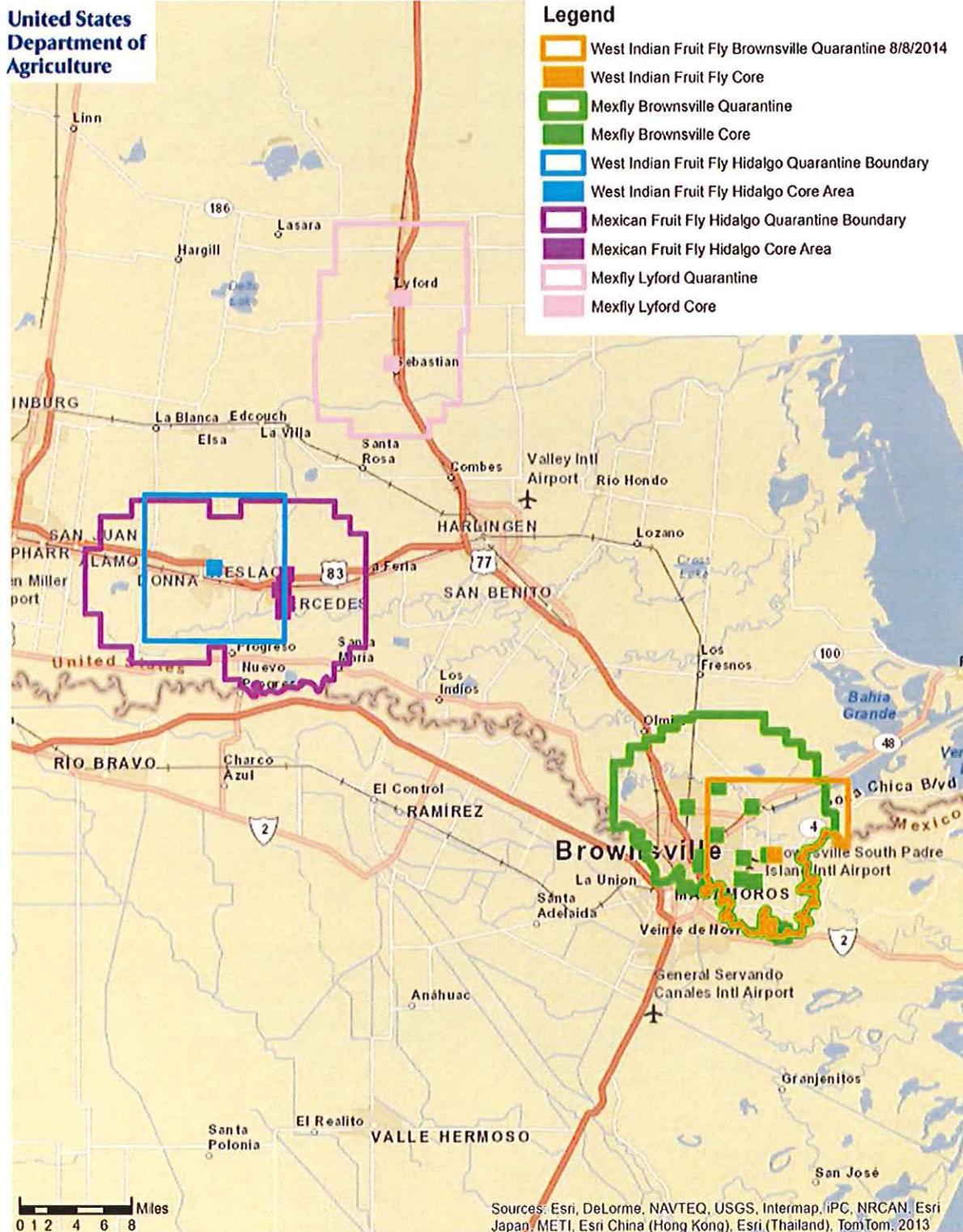


Stuart W. Kuehn
State Plant Health Director, Texas
Plant Protection and Quarantine
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service



Date

Figure 2. Lower Rio Grande Valley, TX fruit fly program areas – August 15, 2014.



Source: USDA APHIS PPD