

Finding of No Significant Impact for the Old World Bollworm Management Program in Puerto Rico

Environmental Assessment November 2015

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) evaluating the impacts of a management program for Old World Bollworm (OWB) (*Helicoverpa armigera*) in the Municipalities of Mayagüez, Hormigueros, San Germán, Cabo Rojo, Lajas, Aguadilla, Isabela, Moca, San Sebastián, Aguada, Rincón, Añasco, Las Marias, Quebradillas, Camuy, Hatillo, Arecibo, Barceloneta, Florida, Lares, Utuado, Maricao, Adjuntas, Yauco, Sabana Grande, Guanica, Guayanilla, Aguadilla and Peñuelas, Jayuya, Villalba, Ponce, Manati, Juana Diaz, and Santa Isabel in Puerto Rico. The EA is incorporated into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by reference and is available at the APHIS website at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/ea/> or from-

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The draft EA was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts to human health and the environment from the proposed management program for OWB. The EA was made available to the public for a 30-day public comment period beginning on September 13, 2015, on the APHIS web site at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/ea/> and <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-health/owb>. Notice of the availability of the EA was published in the El Nuevo Dia, El Vocero de Puerto Rico, Primera Hora, El Norte, La Perla del Sur and San Juan Star newspapers. APHIS received no comments on the EA. The analysis in the EA suggests that the proposed OWB Management Program will not have significant impacts to human health and the environment. Management would consist of chemical treatments applied by producers to agricultural fields that contain OWB host material and have confirmed detections. Ground applications would be made to various OWB host crops (tomato, pepper, beans, pigeon peas, sweet corn, okra, cotton, squash, sorghum) using insecticides that are recommended to producers and registered for use to control OWB. The products proposed for use have larvicidal activity against lepidopteran pests and include methoxyfenozide, indoxacarb, spinetoram, spinosad, nuclear polyhedrosis virus, *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* and *B.t. aizawi*.

APHIS consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) regarding the potential impacts of the OWB Management Program to federally listed species. APHIS received a concurrence letter from the FWS dated September 3, 2015 that the proposed program would not adversely affect the federally listed endangered Puerto Rican plain pigeon (*Columba inornata wetmorei*),

the endangered Yellow-shouldered blackbird (*Agelaius xanthomus*), and the endangered Puerto Rican crested toad (*Peltophryne lemur*). APHIS also determined that the proposed program would have no effect on the West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus manatus*), Puerto Rican nightjar (*Caprimulgus noctitherus*), Puerto Rican sharp-shinned hawk (*Buteo platypterus brunnescens*), Puerto Rican broad-winged hawk (*Accipiter striatus venator*), Puerto Rican parrot (*Amazona vittata vittata*), Caribbean roseate tern (*Sterna dougalii*), Puerto Rican boa (*Epicrates inornatus*), hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricate*), green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), which are known to occur in the proposed action area.

There are no disproportionate adverse effects 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." OWB management activities are not currently anticipated on historic properties; however, in cases where there may be these types of treatments, they would be coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officer and other appropriate contacts to ensure the program will have no impact to historic properties pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

I have determined that there would be no significant impact on the quality of the human environment from the implementation of the preferred alternative. APHIS' finding of no significant impact from the preferred alternative is based on the results of the analysis in the EA. Lastly, because I have not found evidence of significant environmental impact associated with the proposed program, I further find that no additional environmental documentation needs to be prepared and that the program may proceed.


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Nov 18, 2015
Date