

Finding of No Significant Impact
Mexican Fruit Fly Cooperative Eradication Program
Rio Grande Valley, Texas
Environmental Assessment
April 2019

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) which analyzes alternatives for control of an outbreak of the Mexican fruit fly (Mexfly), *Anastrepha ludens* (Loew), an exotic agricultural pest often detected at actionable levels in the Rio Grande Valley region of Texas. USDA APHIS’ involvement in a new Mexfly cooperative eradication program with the State of Texas was triggered in 2019 after the March 9 confirmation of Mexflies detected in Zapata, Zapata County, and the March 14 confirmation of Mexflies detected in Edinburg, Hidalgo County. The EA is incorporated by reference in this document, and is available from:

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

or

USDA–APHIS–PPQ
Fruit Fly National Policy Manager
4700 River Road, Unit 26
Riverdale, MD 20737

The EA for this program analyzed three alternatives: (1) no action, (2) quarantine and commodity certification, and (3) eradication. Each of these alternatives is associated with potential environmental consequences. USDA selected the eradication program using an integrated pest management approach because of its capability to achieve eradication in a way that reduces the overall magnitude of potential environmental consequences.

USDA APHIS completed a programmatic section 7 consultation for a potential seven-county Mexfly program area, and has determined that program activities may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect, federally listed species or critical habitat with the implementation of protection measures. USDA APHIS contacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Texas Coastal Ecological Services Field Office, in Alamo, Texas, to identify species’ locations in the program area, and determine if protection measures must be implemented. USDA APHIS will coordinate with FWS if the program area expands to ensure that federally listed species and critical habitat are protected. 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 implementation of the proposed program will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. I have 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 program has fulfilled consultation requirements associated with the human environment (including low-income and minority populations, children, and Tribal, cultural, and historical resources). Lastly, because I have not found evidence of significant

environmental impacts associated with this proposed program, I find an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared and the program may proceed.

For Stuart Kuehn

04/12/2019

Stuart W. Kuehn
State Plant Health Director, Texas
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Date