



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Finding of No Significant Impact

***Ceratitis* spp. Cooperative Eradication Program San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties, California**

Environmental Assessment November 2021

Background and Program Contacts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzed alternatives for control of the Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly), *Ceratitis capitata* (Wiedemann). *Ceratitis* fruit flies are exotic agricultural pests periodically detected at actionable levels in the State of California. USDA-APHIS' involvement in a new *Ceratitis* control program with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) was triggered by the laboratory confirmation of two adult Medflies trapped within a 3-mile radius during 1 Medfly life cycle. CDFA reported the detections between October 13, 2021 and November 3, 2021. The flies were caught in Jackson traps placed in citrus trees growing in Upland, California. USDA-APHIS analyzed potential impacts from actions proposed for a pest emergency cooperative eradication program. This EA (USDA-APHIS, 2021) is tiered to a final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision published in November 2018 (USDA-APHIS, 2018). The EA and supporting environmental documentation are available on the USDA-APHIS website and from:

USDA-APHIS-PPQ
State Plant Health Director
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 7-400
Sacramento, CA 95814

or

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

Public Involvement

USDA-APHIS is prepared to consider new information received concerning this emergency program. Public feedback may be submitted to either of the PPQ addresses shown above.

Major Issues

Major issues considered in the EA for the proposed Medfly cooperative program include:

- Impacts to agricultural products
- Environmental fate of chemical treatments
- Risks to human health
- Risk to historic properties
- Risks to minority and low-income human populations
- Risks to nontarget species

Alternatives

The EA for the proposed Medfly cooperative program analyzed three alternatives:

1. No Action
2. Quarantine and Commodity Certification
3. Medfly Eradication (Preferred Alternative)

Summary of Environmental Effects of the Alternatives

Each action alternative is associated with potential environmental consequences per the issues; potential impacts were considered in the EA in Chapter III, *The Affected Environment and Potential Effects to the Environment*. Doing nothing, the No Action alternative for USDA-APHIS, could have significant consequences for the agricultural fruits produced in San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties and impact people relying on these products for income or sustenance, especially rural communities. Unregulated pesticide applications to protect host plants could result in the development of pesticide resistance in Medfly populations and see the establishment of fruit fly populations in the Upland region and elsewhere. Quarantine and commodity restrictions would likely result in similar effects as the No Action alternative, would require many more inspection and certification personnel, and could harm agricultural trade. Eradication measures include using chemical compounds that could have potential environmental consequences, but applications could be abated to minimize adverse effects. The prescribed chemical treatments allowed previous fruit fly programs in California to successfully eradicate Medfly outbreaks. Medfly eradication would be very beneficial for California's agricultural community and costs and would reduce people attempting to control fruit fly outbreaks themselves, with unknown environmental consequences, and without coordinating efforts.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The analysis in the EA indicates that there will not be a significant impact on the quality of the human environment as a result of the proposed action, the preferred alternative. This determination is based on the following factors:

1. Cooperative *Ceratitidis* spp. eradication efforts conducted by USDA-APHIS and CDFA will be localized in a section of San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties and not regional or

national in scope; the initial program area is identified in the EA and may be viewed in the appended map.

2. The methods used to manage fruit fly damage are target-specific and are not likely to negatively affect public health and safety when used as described in the EA.
3. The proposed activities will not have an impact on unique characteristics of the geographic area such as park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecological critical areas. The nature of the methods proposed for alleviating damages is not likely to permanently affect the physical environment, as discussed in Chapter III of the EA.
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not highly controversial. Although there is some opposition by some members of the general public to insecticidal use, the proposed program uses are not highly controversial among scientific and industry experts. The EA discusses each method and application of these methods to assure minimal potential effects from their use. The proposed action is not anticipated to have any negative impact on Tribal, minority or low-income populations, as discussed in Chapter III of the EA.
5. Based on the analysis documented in the EA, the effects of the proposed activities are not highly uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risks, except the potential of an established exotic fruit fly population in the Upland region.
6. The proposed action would not establish a precedent for any future action with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about future considerations. The EA proposes the use of delimitation trapping, SIT, and eradication treatments to prevent Medfly from getting a foothold in San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties, using methods that are well-established among professionals managing invasive insects.
7. Impacts to nontarget species, especially other insects, are expected to have a low to negligible impact based on the available information. 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.
8. An evaluation of the proposed action and its effects on threatened and endangered species and critical habitat determined that the proposal would not have adverse effects on threatened and endangered species in the program area as discussed in the EIS and Chapter III of the EA. No designated critical habitat occurs in the program area. In addition, no federally listed species under National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) jurisdiction occur in the program area. USDA-APHIS completed a Section 7 consultation for the program area with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); USDA-APHIS received concurrence from USFWS on November 10, 2021. USDA-APHIS will coordinate with USFWS and NMFS if any changes are made such as an expansion of the program area, or changes in the status of listed species in an affected location, to ensure that federally listed species and critical habitat are protected.
9. The proposed activities would not affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor would they likely cause any loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources as discussed in Chapter III of the EA.
10. The proposed action would comply with all federal, state, and local laws imposed for the protection of the environment.
11. There are no irreversible or irretrievable resource commitments identified by this assessment, except for a minor consumption of fossil fuels for routine operations and work efforts conducted by program personnel.

12. The proposed action is not anticipated to have a significant impact in increasing greenhouse gases or contributing to climate change as discussed in Chapter III of the EA.

NEPA Decision and Rationale

I have carefully reviewed the EA and its supporting environmental documentation. I believe the need for action and issues identified in the EA would be best addressed through implementation of Alternative 3, Medfly Eradication. I considered and based my finding of no significant impact on the quantitative and qualitative risk assessments of the proposed pesticides, the EIS, the analysis in the referenced EA, and on my review of the program's operational characteristics. Alternative 3 is the Preferred Alternative because: (1) it offers the greatest chance of ensuring that Medfly does not become established in California; (2) it will benefit the agricultural fruit crops in San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties best for resource owners and managers within current program funding constraints; (3) it will maximize selectivity of the methods available; (4) it will minimize risks to and conflicts with the public; (5) it will minimize risks to nontarget and threatened and endangered species, (6) it will result in low magnitude or negligible effects on other insect populations, and (7) it will not result in any significant direct or indirect effects on the human environment. The cooperative program will use an integrated pest management strategy which maximizes program effectiveness while conforming to all relevant laws, regulations, policies, and procedures designed to protect the environment.

I have not found evidence of significant environmental impacts associated with this proposed emergency pest management program. Thus, implementation of the Preferred Alternative for this program may proceed.

Helene Wright
State Plant Health Director, California
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

November 22, 2021

Date

Literature Cited

U.S Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, 2021. *Ceratitidis* spp. Cooperative Eradication Program, San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties, California. Environmental Assessment. Riverdale, MD. November 2021.

U.S Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, 2018. Fruit fly Cooperative Control Program. Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Riverdale, MD. November 2018.

USDA-APHIS—U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service