

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program Environmental Assessment in Moffat, Rio Blanco and Routt Counties, Colorado

EA Number: CO-21-1

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzes alternatives for suppressing grasshopper and Mormon cricket outbreaks on rangeland in Moffat, Rio Blanco and Routt counties, Colorado. The EA, incorporated by reference in this document, is available from 3950 North Lewiston Street, Suite 104, Aurora CO 80011 and online at: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/ea/grasshopper-cricket-ea/grasshopper-cricket-by-state>.

The EA includes an analysis of the potential impacts of three alternatives. They included (1) No Action, (2) Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates and Complete Area Coverage, or Reduced Agent Area Treatments (RAATs), and (3) Experimental Treatments. Alternative (2) Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates and Complete Area Coverage, or Reduced Agent Area Treatments (RAATs) is the preferred alternative, although the (1) No Action and (3) Experimental Treatments alternatives are also selected for use when practical. APHIS participation in this suppression program aims to reduce grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations below economical infestation levels in order to protect rangeland ecosystems or cropland adjacent to rangeland.

APHIS has determined that the proposed suppression program, conducted in accordance with the APHIS Rangeland Grasshopper/Mormon cricket Suppression Program Aerial Application Statement of Work (treatment guidelines), which contains the operational procedures, will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

The finding of no significant impacts was determined on the following:

1. Human health: The 2019 EIS contains detailed hazard, exposure, and risk analyses for the chemicals available to APHIS. Impacts to workers and the general public were analyzed for all possible routes of exposure (dermal, oral, inhalation) under a range of conditions designed to overestimate risk. No treatment will occur over congested areas, recreational areas, or schools and if appropriate, a buffer zone will be enacted and enforced. No treatment will occur directly over water bodies. Furthermore, the following buffers will also be adhered to: 500 foot buffer for aerial liquid insecticides; 200 foot buffer with aerial bait; and a 50 foot buffer for all ground applications. No impact to groundwater is anticipated. Workers will utilize necessary safety protection measures to mitigate the risk of exposure. All APHIS treatments will strictly adhere to label requirements and further protection measures as outlined in the Treatment Guidelines and Operational Procedures. No human health effects are likely.
2. Nontargets: Chemical label instructions and APHIS Treatment Guidelines and Operational

Procedures will be strictly followed. This will mitigate any adverse effects on non-targets. Further, domestic bees will be protected in accordance with operational procedures. APHIS will conduct environmental monitoring in areas where buffers are implemented.

3. Endangered and threatened species: Protection measures that resulted from informal consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service will be implemented and therefore, the proposed suppression program is not likely to adversely affect endangered or threatened species or their habitats.
4. Socioeconomic issues: The suppression of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets in the affected area would have beneficial economic impacts to local landowners. Crops near infested lands would be protected from grasshopper and Mormon cricket outbreaks, resulting in higher crop production.
5. Cultural resources and events: APHIS will confer with BLM, USFS, or other appropriate land management agencies on a local level to protect these areas of special concern.
6. Executive Orders 12898 (low income and minorities), 13045 (children), and 13186 (migratory birds): No adverse effects are anticipated on low income and/or minority populations or children because suppression treatments will be conducted primarily on open rangeland where human activity is unlikely. APHIS routinely conducts programs in a manner that minimizes the impact to the environment, including any impact to migratory birds.

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the EA, the implementation of the treatment guidelines (containing the operational procedures) and the protection measures for endangered and threatened species, , I have determined that the proposed suppression program will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

June 17, 2021

Patrick McPherrin
State Plant Health Director

Date