

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program
Environmental Assessment in Adams, Benton, Columbia, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman, and Yakima Counties in eastern Washington.

EA Number: WA-21-01

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 Adams, Benton, Columbia, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman, and Yakima Counties in eastern Washington. The EA, incorporated by reference in this document, is available for review from USDA APHIS PPQ, 222 N Havana Street, Spokane, WA 99202, 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) Scientific Treatments alternatives are also selected for use when practical. APHIS' participation in this suppression program is based on the potential damage caused by outbreaks of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets such as reduction of critical forage and habitat for some species of wildlife, the destruction of rangeland revegetation projects, the economic impact to livestock operations that depend on forage, and the creation of public nuisances. The benefits of treatments include the protection of forage and habitat, the increased probability of success of revegetation projects, the reduced economic impact to ranchers from forage loss, and the elimination of public nuisances. The goal of the proposed suppression program analyzed in this EA is to reduce grasshopper populations to an acceptable level in order to protect rangeland ecosystems and/or cropland adjacent to rangeland.

APHIS has determined that the proposed suppression program, conducted in accordance with the APHIS Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program 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 - Potential exposures to the general public from program application rates are infrequent and of low magnitude. The low levels of exposure pose no risk of direct toxicity, carcinogenicity, neurotoxicity, genotoxicity, reproductive toxicity, or developmental impacts to the public. APHIS will inform the public well in advance of any programs to allow hypersensitive individuals to request exclusion from the treatment area. The potential for adverse effects to workers is negligible if proper safety procedures are followed, including wearing the required protective clothing. Therefore, routine safety precautions and program guidelines are expected to provide adequate public and worker health protection.
2. Non-targets – In any given treatment season only a fraction (less than 1 percent) of the total rangeland in eastern Washington is likely to be treated for grasshopper control. No vertebrate animal species would be exposed to toxic levels of insecticide from any of the alternatives. Any of the alternatives could result in reduction of prey species for insectivores. However, this reduction will be minimized by the insecticide and alternative choices. Plants would not be exposed to toxic levels of insecticide, and any reduction in pollinators would be minimized by following program

guidelines. Impacts on aquatic arthropods will be avoided or minimized by utilizing buffers around water. Impacts to non-target terrestrial arthropods will be minimized by insecticide and alternative choices. Water and selected sensitive sites in or near treatment blocks will be monitored according to the APHIS Environmental Monitoring Plan and in consultation with the landowner/manager.

3. Endangered and threatened species - Protection measures that resulted from informal consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service will be implemented and, therefore, any proposed suppression program is not likely to adversely affect listed threatened or endangered species or their habitats. No programs will be undertaken until consultation is complete and all listed species concerns have been addressed.
4. Socioeconomic issues -- The suppression of grasshoppers in the affected area would have beneficial economic impacts to local landowner, farmers and beekeepers. 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. APHIS will also confer with the appropriate Tribal Authority and with the BIA office at a local level to ensure that the timing and location of planned program treatments do not coincide or conflict with cultural events or observances, on Tribal and/or allotted lands.
6. Executive Orders: 12898 (low income and minorities); 13045 (children); and 13186 (migratory birds) – Low income, minority, and youth population will not be put at risk by any of the alternatives when guidelines are followed. Program guidelines will assure no significant impact to migratory birds.

Executive Order No. 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health and Safety Risks: Treatments used for grasshoppers programs are primarily conducted on open rangelands where children would not be expected to be present during treatment or enter during the restricted entry period after treatment.

Executive Order No. 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds: Impacts are minimized as a result of buffers to water, habitat, nesting areas, riparian areas, and the use of RAATs. For any given treatment, only a portion of the environment will be treated, therefore minimizing potential impacts to migratory bird populations.

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.

Name
State Plant Health Director

May 4th, 2021

Date