

Finding of No Significant Impact
Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program
Environmental Assessment in OREGON
EA-OR-2022-01

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 17 counties in eastern Oregon. The EA, incorporated by reference in this document, is available from USDA APHIS PPQ, 6035 NE 78th Court, Portland, Oregon 97218 or 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), (3) Experimental Treatments. APHIS participation in this suppression requires the official request from Federal, tribal, state and/or private land managers. When grasshopper populations reach a level of economic infestation in a specific area, a suppression program will be considered. To reduce further destruction to rangeland vegetation, APHIS is authorized under the Plant Protection Act (PPA) 7 (United States Code ~ 7701 et seq.) to protect rangeland from economic damage by grasshopper or Mormon cricket infestations.

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 contain 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 areas for potential treatment are on rangeland in remote locations, with generally limited (or restricted) access of any kind and away from areas of habitation, congregation, or transportation, as utilized by the general public. Toxicity to humans is also very low risk due to the specific pesticide formulations proposed. All APHIS treatments will strictly adhere to label requirements and further protection measures as outlined in the 2021 Treatment Guidelines and Operational Procedures which include standard buffers of sensitive site including buildings. Program personnel will investigate the treatment areas beforehand to detect any unforeseen human activities in the area, advise any public present about the activities, and continue to provide these services while monitoring treatments unto completion. As a result of these mitigating factors, no human health effects are likely.
2. Non-targets: APHIS Treatment Guidelines and Operational Procedures will be strictly followed in addition to pesticide label requirements, including additional buffers for water and sensitive sites such as beehives (in excess of pesticide label requirements). Treatments are targeted to limited areas and further reduced by Reduced Agent Area

Treatment methods (RAATs) whenever possible, resulting in reduced rates of pesticide (below label) and coverage (approximately 50%) within treatment blocks. This will mitigate significant adverse effects on endemic non-targets, including pollinators and other species potentially susceptible to the pesticide formulations proposed, especially any terrestrial arthropods, in or near treatment areas. Aquatic arthropods and other non-targets will be completely protected by standard program buffers for water. Pre-treatment and post-treatment environmental monitoring is part of the APHIS treatment guidelines and is strictly adhered to work activity (APHIS Directive 5640.1). As a result, no adverse effects are found to be likely for non-targets. No vertebrate animal species would be exposed to toxic levels of insecticides. Reduction in insects as prey species for insectivores would be reduced by the insecticide choices and by the reduction in area coverage. Plants would not be exposed to toxic levels of insecticides and any reduction of pollinators would be minor and temporary.

3. Endangered and threatened species: In accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), consultation is conducted with Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) for any action authorized, funded, or affected by a federal agency that may affect listed endangered or threatened species or their critical habitats. A Biological Assessment (BA) to determine the potential impact from the proposed treatment was prepared and submitted to FWS and their concurrence was granted to APHIS. Protection measures that resulted from the national and local consultation processes with 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: Ranchers (livestock owners) are the major social group that is economically impacted by rangeland grasshopper infestations. Extensive populations of pest grasshopper species can deplete available natural plant resources for several years during outbreak conditions. Losses occurred from reduced available range forages for livestock and wildlife can be considerable, and thus cause starvation, sickness, and mortality among these animals. The general public is the main consumer segment that relies on these animal products and can be economically affected by limited and inconstant supply. The county and state property value base for tax purposes and supporting revenue for community services also may be impacted. Losses caused by Grasshoppers and Mormon crickets would not be as significant under the preferred alternative, as under the No Action Alternative.

5. Cultural resources and events: No county or Tribal cultural resources or events will be affected negatively by the proposed treatment. In fact, a suppression treatment should help reduce the insect annoyance and property damage concerns at some of these events and be considered beneficial.
6. Executive Orders; 12898 (low income and minorities), 13045 (children), and 13186 (migratory birds): The proposed action should provide some assurance of stable work and income by mitigating potential disruptions in local employment. "No Affect" with children for health and safety. "No Affect" on migratory birds.

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the EA, the 2002 and 2019 EIS, and the implementation of the treatment guidelines and the protection measures for endangered and threatened species, it is my determination that conventional or RAATS application of carbaryl bait, or diflubenzuron does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. I find that the mitigation measures for RAATs treatments, specified in the EA, and the 2002 and 2019 EIS, will result in a "not affect" or "not likely to adversely affect" determination to threatened, endangered or proposed species, critical habitat, and/or proposed critical habitat and is consistent with Executive order 13186, "Migratory bird Act" and the "Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA). I find that the environmental process undertaken for this program is entirely consistent with Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations" and Executive Order No. 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks." I have determined that the proposed suppression program will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

Erin Stiers /s/

May 3rd, 2022

Name
State Plant Health Director

Date