

Finding of No Significant Impact
Nursery Treatment Efficacy Study within Worcester County, Massachusetts,
to Support the Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program
Environmental Assessment, April 2010

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for the study of new chemical treatments for potential use in Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) eradication projects. The EA is incorporated into this finding of no significant impact (FONSI) by reference. It is available online at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/ea and from—

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Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Plant Protection and Quarantine
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The EA analyzed two alternatives: (1) no action by APHIS, and (2) the preferred alternative, to determine if soil applications of various insecticides will result in effective levels in tree tissues that beetles feed upon. APHIS would actively seek to determine whether labeled soil applications of systemic insecticides can achieve acceptable residue levels in several ALB host tree species grown in ground within a commercial nursery. This would be useful information in the design of a fully integrated eradication program for ALB wherever it may occur. If acceptable residue levels are detected, host nursery stock would be able to be moved out of the quarantine. The pesticides to be tested include formulations of imidacloprid, dinotefuron, clothianidin, and thiamethoxam, and the nursery trees to be tested will be sugar maple, red maple, elm, and London plane. The goal is to determine whether applications made using standard nursery practices and rates are sufficient to control ALB.

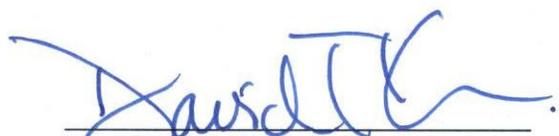
APHIS considered the potential environmental consequences of each alternative in the EA. Human exposure and risk from the use of any of the four pesticides proposed for study is expected to be minimal based on the method of application, available toxicity data, and the fact that the work will be conducted exclusively within a commercial nursery. Applications of the study pesticides, as proposed in this program, are not expected to impact aquatic organisms. Exposure and risk to most terrestrial nontarget organisms is expected to be minimal, the exception being that some insects which feed on treated trees could be impacted. However, based on the method of application (ground application to the soil), no drift would be expected; impacts would be restricted to those insects that are sensitive to the study chemicals and feed on treated trees. The treatment of a minimum of 1,600 trees in a nursery setting is insignificant relative to the number of trees in the Worcester area, and is unlikely to result in significant cumulative environmental impacts to the area. There are no federally listed species in the area where the proposed action is to take place. Therefore, the proposed action will have no effect on federally listed species.

Bee keepers and others remain concerned about the use of insecticides in the ALB program due to their potential impact on honey bees. APHIS is sensitive to these concerns and wants to ensure that its use of insecticides does not result in harm to pollinators, including bees or bee colonies. Based on available information, the risk to honey bees from the use of the proposed insecticides in this study is likely to be minimal. The number of trees to be treated is very small in relation to the number of trees in the eradication area and to other flowering plants in the area, and it is unlikely

that large numbers of bees will gather pollen and nectar only from the treated trees. In addition, pesticide exposure to honey bee populations from these soil treatments will be reduced compared to conventional broadcast applications of insecticides.

On April 1, 2010, APHIS released the EA for public comment. The comment period expired on May 1, 2009; no comments were received.

I have determined that there would be no significant impact on the quality of the human environment from the implementation of the preferred alternative. APHIS' finding of no significant impact from the preferred alternative is based on the expected environmental consequences, as analyzed in the EA. Further, I find the preferred alternative to be consistent with the principles of environmental justice as expressed in Executive Order 12898—implementation of the preferred alternative will not result in any disproportionately high adverse human health or environmental effects to any minority populations or low-income populations. In addition, the preferred alternative is consistent with Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks." There will be no disproportionate effects to the environmental health or safety of children with the implementation of this program. Lastly, because I have not found evidence of significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed study, I further find that an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared.



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Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

5.6.2010
Date