

**Finding of No Significant Impact Pesticide Use in the Imported Fire Ant Program**  
**Environmental Assessment**

**July 2013**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) to update the list of approved insecticides that can be used to meet the requirements of the the Imported Fire Ant (IFA) quarantine. The additional insecticides are being added to provide a broader range of chemical treatment options and are not being proposed as additional treatments beyond what is currently required in the quarantine program. The EA is incorporated into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by reference and is available at the APHIS website at [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant\\_health/plant\\_pest\\_info/fireants/index.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/fireants/index.shtml) or from—

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The draft EA for IFA considered two alternatives: (1) no action by APHIS which maintains the current program, and (2) to update treatments and the area of the current IFA Federal quarantine program (preferred alternative). In the preferred alternative, APHIS is proposing to change its IFA Federal quarantine program regulations by revising the list of approved pesticides and the commodity type (plants grown in containers, balled and burlapped, or field or grass sod) to which they are applied for use against IFA in commercial nursery and sod facilities. APHIS is also proposing to expand the areas in which IFA quarantine activities may be conducted. A notice of availability for the EA was published in the Federal Register. The IFA EA was made available to the public for a 60-day public comment period that ended on May 6, 2013. APHIS received four comments supporting the preferred alternative discussed in the EA.

The analysis in the EA regarding impacts from the preferred alternative suggests that significant impacts to human health and the environment would not be expected. Insecticide applications only occur on production nurseries where commodities within the IFA quarantine are shipped to areas outside of the quarantine. Adherence to pesticide label requirements regarding the protection of workers and the general public will reduce exposure and risk to human health. Production nurseries where treatments occur are intensively managed facilities where populations of sensitive ecological resources would not be expected to exclusively occur and be impacted by the addition of new insecticides.

Impacts of the preferred alternative on air, water, and soil quality are not expected to be significant where IFA-related and other pesticide treatments occur. Any environmental impacts would be expected to occur primarily within the nurseries where treatments of containerized plants and other commodities are made prior to shipment. Label requirements and restrictions

for the proposed insecticides will reduce the potential for off-site transport and impacts to environmental quality.

There are no disproportionate adverse effects to minorities, low-income populations, or children, in accordance with Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations," and Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks."

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 past experience regarding this program and the environment analyzed in this EA. Lastly, because I have not found evidence of significant environmental impact associated with the proposed program, I find that no additional environmental documentation needs to be prepared and that the program may proceed.

*Charles Brown*

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*July 9, 2013*  
Date