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USDA Provides more than \$1.7 Million to Support Projects that Protect Maryland Agriculture and Natural Resources

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WASHINGTON, January 18, 2023 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is allocating more than \$1.7 million to Maryland as part of a nationwide effort to strengthen the country's infrastructure for pest detection, surveillance, and mitigation, as well as protect the U.S. nursery system. USDA is providing more than \$70 million in funding this year to support 350 projects in 48 states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. The Plant Protection Act Section 7721 gives USDA the authority to provide this funding.

"Agriculture is Maryland's number one industry, made up of 12,400 farms and nearly 21,300 producers. Protecting Maryland's agricultural industry is vital," said USDA Under Secretary Jenny Moffitt. "These projects will help Maryland protect its

resources and continue contributing to a strong national agricultural economy.”

These funds will support projects covering a range of plant health protection activities, including, but not limited to:

- \$218,859 to measure the efficacy of a leaf-spotting fungus as a biological control of the noxious weed, common crupina;
- \$191,187 to evaluate the use of predatory, stingless wasps as biological control agents of the emerald ash borer;
- \$154,117 to develop and improve plant DNA virus-detection protocols;
- \$146,403 to improve predictive modeling and surveillance in the state;
- \$124,000 to determine the risk invasive weeds pose of spreading foreign plant pathogens;
- \$134,914 to study disease-causing fungi on plants intercepted at U.S. ports of entry; and
- \$31,630 to support the National Clean Plant Network’s use of citrus- and rose-pathogen collections for research.

Since 2009, USDA has supported more than 5,170 projects and provided nearly \$809 million in PPA 7721 funding. Collectively, these projects allow USDA and its partners to quickly detect and rapidly respond to invasive plant pests and diseases. These projects also enable our country to maintain the infrastructure necessary to ensure disease-free, certified plants are available to U.S. specialty crop producers.

View the fiscal year 2023 Plant Protection Act’s Section 7721 spending plans on the USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service website: www.aphis.usda.gov/ppa-projects.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.