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USDA Provides more than \$2.5 Million to Support Projects that Protect Texas Agriculture and Natural Resources

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WASHINGTON, January 18, 2023 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is allocating more than \$2.5 million to Texas 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.

"Texas has 247,000 farms and ranches and is a major producer of cotton, hay, and corn," said USDA Under Secretary Jenny Moffitt. "During the last census, Texas accounted for 6% of U.S. agriculture sales. The State's agriculture is a vital industry

for Texas as well as the nation. These projects will help Texas protect those agricultural resources and our economy.”

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

- \$627,952 to support Mexican fruit fly (*Anastrepha ludens*) response and outreach;
- \$294,050 to support National Clean Plant Network plant stocks for citrus and roses;
- \$260,000 to establish biological control agents to manage the invasive Brazilian peppertree;
- \$257,313 to develop temperature-driven sterile insect technique to manage invasive fruit flies;
- \$223,370 to use gene-editing technology to develop antimicrobials that target bacterial plant pathogens; and
- \$237,854 to develop a treatment for Texas citrus infected with citrus greening disease, which targets the disease at the molecular level.

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.

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