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USDA Protects Fruit, Vegetable and Livestock Producers with Emergency Funding to Address Exotic Fruit Fly and New World Screwworm Outbreaks

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 15, 2023 – USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is using emergency funding to respond to the threats associated with growing outbreaks of exotic fruit flies and New World screwworm. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack approved the transfer of \$213.3 million from the Commodity Credit Corporation to APHIS to directly support emergency response efforts domestically and internationally to protect fruit, vegetable and livestock industries and producers.

“Increasing our response efforts to exotic fruit fly and New World screwworm

outbreaks is critical to minimizing their potential impact on our nation’s agriculture and trade,” said USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt. “This funding will enable us to swiftly prevent both populations’ further spread before they become established and harder to eradicate.”

The Secretary is authorized to transfer funding from the Commodity Credit Corporation to address emergency outbreaks of animal and plant pests and diseases. APHIS is currently addressing an increasing number of outbreaks of fruit flies in the United States and Mexico and New World screwworm in Central America.

Exotic fruit flies are among the most destructive fruit and vegetable pests in the world. APHIS will use \$103.5 million of these funds to address known outbreaks of fruit flies in California and increase preventive activities in other susceptible areas in the United States. APHIS will also use the funding to address the increasing numbers of fruit fly incursions in areas of Guatemala and Mexico, where APHIS and cooperators maintain a buffer against northward spread of the Mediterranean fruit fly.

APHIS will use \$109.8 million in emergency funds to combat New World screwworm detections in areas of Panama and other areas that are critical to preventing the pest from spreading back into North America. The most recent detection of screwworm in the United States was an outbreak in wild deer in the Florida Keys in 2016, which took over 5 months to eradicate. New World screwworm is a devastating livestock pest that can affect any warm-blooded animal, including humans. USDA and partners eradicated this screwworm from the United States, Mexico, and Central America in a multi-decade, multi-billion-dollar effort, creating a barrier in Panama.

While APHIS response efforts are vital to preventing further fruit fly and New World screwworm outbreaks, there are also actions the American public can take to help protect crops and livestock from invasive pests.

For more information on invasive insects or plant diseases, visit [HungryPests.com](https://www.hungrypests.com). To report invasive plant pests or diseases in your area, find your state under the “Find or Report Pests by State” dropdown tab on [HungryPests.com](https://www.hungrypests.com).

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.