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# USDA Provides more than \$5 Million to Projects that Protect Florida Agriculture and Natural Resources

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WASHINGTON, February 6, 2024 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is allocating more than \$5 million to Florida 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. Through the authority of the Plant Protection Act Section 7721, USDA is providing more than \$70 million in funding this year. These funds will support 374 projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Puerto Rico.

"Florida's 47,300 farms and ranches span 9.7 million acres. It's a major producer of oranges, strawberries, tomatoes, and bell peppers," said USDA Under Secretary Jenny Moffitt. "These projects will help protect Florida's agricultural industry, which by extension protects our national food security."

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

- More than \$1.2 million to support detector dog inspection and domestic pest detection;
- \$500,000 to survey for invasive fruit flies in the state;
- \$377,000 to support clean plant programs for citrus;

- \$414,782 to meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency registration requirements for Verticillium nonalfalfae invasive tree-of-heaven management;
- \$327,153 to conduct genetic plant and insect research to manage citrus greening disease;
- \$258,666 to establish and test a biological control of air potato;
- \$250,000 to establish and test a biological control for the Brazilian peppertree;
- \$223,795 to develop biological control agents for use against cogongrass; and
- \$203,196 to survey tomatoes in the state for destructive, invasive pests.

Since 2009, USDA has supported more than 5,520 projects and provided nearly \$870 million in PPA 7721 funding. These projects help USDA, and its partners quickly detect and respond to invasive plant pests and diseases. They also help our country maintain the essential infrastructure in place that enables U.S. specialty crop producers to have access to healthy, certified disease-free plants.

View the fiscal year 2024 Plant Protection Act's Section 7721 spending plans online: [www.aphis.usda.gov/ppa-projects](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppa-projects).

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