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USDA Provides more than \$3.2 Million to Support Projects that Protect Texas Food Supply and Natural Resources

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WASHINGTON, February 6, 2024 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is allocating more than \$3.2 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. 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.

"Texas has 246,000 farms and ranches and is a major producer of cotton, hay, corn and sorghum," said USDA Under Secretary Jenny Moffitt. "About 14% of Texas' workforce is dedicated to the state's agricultural economy. Agriculture is a vital industry in Texas. These projects will help Texas protect those resources and our national economy."

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

- \$827,952 to support Mexican fruit fly (*Anastrepha ludens*) response and outreach;
- \$274,943 to establish biological control agents to manage the invasive Brazilian peppertree;
- \$251,367 to develop treatments that leverage viruses to control bacterial plant pathogens;
- \$238,474 to develop advanced diagnostic tools to identify and monitor the Central American locust in the state; and
- \$201,210 to leverage mating disruption to manage California red scale in Texas citrus;
- \$194,921 to develop an environmentally safe and effective biological control to manage citrus canker and citrus black spot disease; and
- \$173,000 to support National Clean Plant Network plant stocks for citrus and roses.

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.

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