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USDA Grants More Than \$1.7 Million to Protect Massachusetts Crops and Natural Resources

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Press Release

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WASHINGTON, January 14, 2025 - Massachusetts is set to receive more than \$1.7 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to combat invasive plant pests and diseases and protect the state's vital agriculture and natural resources. This funding is part of a \$70 million nationwide initiative supporting 357 projects across 49 states, Tribal lands, Guam, and Puerto Rico, authorized under the Plant Protection Act Section 7721.

Massachusetts has over 7,100 farms spanning 470,000 acres that produce more than \$607 million in agricultural goods annually.

"Massachusetts showcases the innovation and efficiency of small-scale farming," said USDA Under Secretary Jenny Lester Moffitt. "To support Massachusetts' producers, it's essential to help protect the state's agriculture industry from the threat of invasive plant pests and diseases. Together, we can ensure the strength of our agricultural community at home and abroad, building on the \$226 million in exports of Massachusetts agricultural products shipped in 2022."

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

- \$215,133 for biological control research to manage the invasive Japanese beetle using a pathogen called *Ovavesicula popilliae*;
- \$193,256 to fund and evaluate a biocontrol program to manage the invasive box tree moth, which feeds on boxwood plants;
- \$192,553 to evaluate a biological control agent to manage invasive shot hole borers, which attack a wide variety of tree species;
- \$150,000 to support a public outreach and education program designed to reduce the spread and promote early detection of the Asian longhorned beetle;
- \$148,875 to perform the final research needed to establish a biocontrol program to manage hemlock woolly adelgid using the predatory beetle *Scymnus camptodromus*;
- \$122,863 to develop an optimized lure to detect and monitor detection and monitoring of Old World bollworm;

- \$99,000 to identify pheromones to control invasive longhorn beetles, focusing on Asian and South American species;
- \$95,350 to use molecular identification tools to aid in surveys for invasive defoliating moths, and much more.

These efforts are part of a broader mission to ensure U.S. agriculture thrives in the face of new challenges. Since 2009, USDA has invested nearly \$940 million in more than 5,800 projects to detect and respond to invasive plant pests and diseases quickly. This work also ensures specialty crop producers have access to certified, disease-free plants.

For a full list of projects funded in Massachusetts and nationwide, visit the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service [website](#) (562.47 KB).