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# USDA Grants More Than \$4 Million to Protect Florida Crops and Natural Resources

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## Press Release

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**WASHINGTON, January 14, 2025** - Florida is set to receive nearly \$5 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.

"Florida's 44,400 farms and ranches cover 9.7 million acres, and play a key role in producing tomatoes, strawberries, melons, and sweet corn," said USDA Under Secretary Jenny Lester Moffitt. "These initiatives will safeguard Florida's agriculture industry, and in turn, strengthen our national food security."

This year's funding will power a variety of projects in Florida aimed at stopping harmful pests and safeguarding plant health. Highlights include:

- \$1 million to survey for invasive fruit flies;
- \$1.3 million to support agricultural detector dog teams, which search for destructive invasive plant pests in mail facilities receiving international goods;
- \$415,000 to support National Clean Plant Network foundation plant stocks free from economically damaging diseases;
- \$150,000 to support research to eradicate the yellow legged hornet from the United States;
- \$150,000 to develop and evaluate a biocontrol to manage the invasive air potato, a weedy vine;
- \$203,196 to survey for invasive threats of tomato commodities;
- \$145,355 to develop and evaluate a biocontrol of cactus moth; and 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 Florida and nationwide, visit the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service [website](#) (562.47 KB).

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