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USDA Secures \$129.2 Million in Emergency Funds to Combat Exotic Fruit Fly Outbreaks

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Press Release

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WASHINGTON, January 17, 2025 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is using emergency funding to respond to the threats associated with growing outbreaks of exotic fruit flies. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack approved the transfer of \$129.2 million from the Commodity Credit Corporation to APHIS to directly support emergency response efforts domestically and internationally. This funding will support critical efforts in the U.S. and in buffer zones in Guatemala and Mexico to prevent the northward spread of these destructive pests.

“Fruit flies attack more than 400 different types of plants, destroying entire crops, disrupting trade, and causing major financial losses,” said Michael Watson, Administrator, APHIS. “Dedicating emergency funds to address these outbreaks means the collaborative effort to protect U.S. agriculture from this unprecedented outbreak can continue. We are reinforcing prevention measures, investing in long-term solutions like improved sterile insect facilities, and bolstering our response to detections.”

The Secretary of Agriculture 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.

Exotic fruit flies are among the most destructive fruit and vegetable pests in the world. APHIS will use \$129.2 million of these funds to safeguard billions of dollars in vegetable and fruit commodities by:

- working with local, state, and international partners to eradicate exotic fruit fly outbreaks domestically and internationally to prevent the spread of these pests and protect the nation’s agriculture and U.S. trade;
- bolstering surveillance systems to detect new incursions; and
- repairing sterile insect facilities in California and Texas and replacing essential equipment to enhance the effectiveness of the program.

The timing of APHIS’ response is crucial to prevent the spread of these invasive pests and to monitor their movement to prevent future outbreaks impacting a \$14.8 billion industry and the livelihoods of countless producers and communities.

The USDA, California Department of Food and Agriculture and Texas Department of Agriculture are working together to combat an outbreak of exotic fruit flies in several

counties in California and Texas.

Tephritid [fruit flies](#) spend their larval stages feeding and growing in over 400 host plants.

Introduction of invasive fruit fly species into the United States causes economic losses from destruction and spoiling of host commodities by larvae, costs associated with implementing control measures, and loss of market share due to restrictions on shipment of host commodities. The extensive damage and wide host range of tephritid fruit flies can become an obstacle to agricultural diversification and trade when pest fruit fly species become established.

For more information on invasive insects or plant diseases, visit HungryPests.com. For the latest invasive fruit fly quarantines, visit [APHIS' Exotic Fruit Flies webpage](#). 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.

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