

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 00-039-1]

Availability of an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that an environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact have been prepared by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service relative to a program for the control of the Asian longhorned beetle, *Anoplophora glabripennis* (Motschulsky). The environmental assessment provides a basis for our conclusion that the implementation of our proposed program to contain the Asian longhorned beetle will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Based on its finding of no significant impact, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has determined that an environmental impact statement need not be prepared.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact are available for public inspection at USDA, room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing to inspect these documents are requested to call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Michael B. Stefan, Operations Officer, Invasive Species and Pest Management, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 134, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-8247.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Asian longhorned beetle, *Anoplophora glabripennis*, an insect native to China, Japan, Korea, and the Isle of Hainan, is a destructive pest of hardwood trees. It is known to attack healthy maple, horse chestnut, birch, Rose of Sharon, poplar, willow, elm, locust, mulberry, chinaberry, apple, cherry, pear, and citrus trees. It may also attack other species of hardwood trees. In addition, nursery stock, logs, green lumber, firewood, stumps, roots, branches, and debris of one-half inch or more in diameter are subject to infestation. The beetle bores into the heartwood of a host tree, eventually killing it. Immature beetles bore into tree trunks and branches, causing heavy sap flow from wounds and sawdust accumulation at tree bases. They feed on, and overwinter in, the interiors of trees. Adult beetles emerge in the spring and summer months from round holes approximately 3/8-inch diameter (about the size of a dime) that they bore through the trunks of trees. After emerging, adult beetles feed for 2 to 3 days and then mate. Adult females then lay eggs in oviposition sites that they make on the branches of trees. A new generation of Asian longhorned beetle is produced each year. If this pest moves into the hardwood forests of the United States, the nursery and forest products industries could experience severe economic losses.

The Asian longhorned beetle regulations (7 CFR 301.51-1 through 301.51-9) restrict the interstate movement of regulated articles from quarantined areas to prevent the artificial spread of Asian longhorned beetle to noninfested areas of the United States. Portions of New York City and Nassau and Suffolk Counties in the State of New York and portions of Cook County, Du Page County, and the village of Summit in the State of Illinois are already designated as quarantined areas.

APHIS' current Asian longhorned beetle eradication activities are limited to the removal and destruction of trees that are determined to be infested with Asian longhorned beetle. Because current eradication efforts have been unsuccessful, APHIS has evaluated additional control methods available to help eradicate this destructive pest from the United States.

To provide the public with APHIS' review and analysis of environmental impacts associated with these control methods, we have prepared an environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact entitled, "Asian Longhorned Beetle Program," dated February 2000. The environmental assessment considers various methods to protect trees against the harmful effects of the Asian longhorned beetle and provides a basis for our conclusion that there would be no significant impact on the quality of the human environment from implementation of soil or trunk injection insecticide treatments of trees.

The environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact may be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/ead/alb.html>. You may request paper copies of the environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact by calling or writing to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Please refer to the title of the environmental assessment when requesting copies. The environmental assessment is also available for review in our reading room (information on the location and hours of the reading room is listed under the heading **ADDRESSES** at the beginning of this notice).

The environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact have been prepared in accordance with: (1) The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), (2) regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), (3) USDA regulations implementing NEPA (7 CFR part 1), and (4) APHIS' NEPA Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372).

Done in Washington, DC, this 19th day of April 2000.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 00-10386 Filed 4-25-00; 8:45 am]

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