



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Announces Additional Funding for Ohio to Eradicate Asian Longhorned Beetle

WASHINGTON, Aug. 7, 2012--Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the availability of \$14.8 million in funding to prevent the spread of the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) in Ohio.

“The USDA, together with our partners in Ohio, is working hard to contain and eradicate the Asian longhorned beetle from Clermont County,” Vilsack said. “With this funding, USDA reinforces our shared goal of stopping this destructive pest and protecting as many trees as possible. The additional funds will allow for an increased effort in fighting the beetle and help prevent the beetle from spreading to surrounding areas.”

The additional funding will be used to increase tree inspection surveys in order to determine the extent of the infestation and ensure the timely removal of infested trees.

The beetle threatens recreational areas, forests, and suburban and urban shade trees. Important American industries such as timber, nursery stock, maple syrup production, and tourism—industries that support millions of American jobs and pump billions of dollars into our nation’s economy—are at risk.

The beetle was discovered in Bethel, Ohio in June 2011. Currently, a 56-square mile area regulated to control the pest includes all of Tate Township and a portion of Monroe Township. Due to the recent detection of two infested trees in Stonelick Township, the regulated area will be expanded to include additional properties near this new infestation. To date, USDA and its partners have removed 8,489 trees and surveyed 146,620 host trees in an effort to stop the ALB infestation in Ohio.

The ALB eradication program is a cooperative effort among various federal, state and local agencies. USDA and its partners use integrated pest eradication strategies which include quarantines to stop the movement of regulated material, visual inspections around confirmed sites to determine the scope of infestations, and the removal of infested trees.

USDA has declared eradication of three ALB infested areas: Chicago, Ill. and Hudson County, N.J. in 2008; and Islip, N.Y. in 2011. USDA and its partners continue to fight ALB infestations in Ohio, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York.

ALB was first discovered in Brooklyn, N.Y. in 1996. The insect is about 1 to 1.5 inches long, has a shiny jet black body with distinctive white spots and long antennae (often twice the length of the bodies) that are banded in black and white. In her lifetime, adult females chew up to 90 egg sites directly on the bark of healthy hardwood trees, where they lay eggs. After the eggs hatch, the worm-like larvae tunnel into the growing layers of the tree and continue tunneling into the woody tissue of the tree, where they continue to feed and develop. This feeding and burrowing causes the tree to weaken and eventually die. In the spring, beetle larvae develop into an adult insect and chew their way out, leaving dime-sized, perfectly round exit holes out of the tree.

Early detection is crucial in the fight to eradicate the Asian longhorned beetle. USDA encourages the public to inspect their trees regularly and to be aware of the risks of transporting forests pests when moving firewood. If you see any signs of an Asian longhorned beetle infestation, report it immediately. Visit www.BeetleBusters.info for more information or to report a sighting. You can also call the ALB toll free hotline at 1-866-702-9938. For information about the beetle and program activities, please contact the Ohio ALB eradication program at 513-381-7180 or log on to www.aphis.usda.gov.

With Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, APHIS works tirelessly to create and sustain opportunities for America's farmers, ranchers and producers. Each day, APHIS promotes U.S. agricultural health, regulates genetically engineered organisms, administers the Animal Welfare Act, and carries out wildlife damage management activities, all to help safeguard the nation's agriculture, fishing and forestry industries. In the event that a pest or disease of concern is detected, APHIS implements emergency protocols and partners with affected states and other countries to quickly manage or eradicate the outbreak. To promote the health of U.S. agriculture in the international trade arena, APHIS develops and advances science-based standards with trading partners to ensure America's agricultural exports, valued at more than \$137 billion annually, are protected from unjustified restrictions.

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