

USDA EXPANDS EMERALD ASH BORER QUARANTINE IN ILLINOIS, INDIANA AND OHIO

WASHINGTON, Nov. 21, 2006--The U. S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service today announced the expansion of its emerald ash borer (EAB) quarantine to include the entire states of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, more than doubling the previously quarantined area which includes the entire lower peninsula of Michigan. The new quarantine becomes effective on Dec. 1 following the issuance of a federal order.

APHIS is expanding the quarantine in response to the destructive nature of this invasive plant pest and the significant threat it poses to the ash resource in our nation's forests and residential landscapes. The quarantine regulations will help to mitigate the spread of the pest while the science community continues to work to develop solutions to combat EAB, including improved detection and control strategies. The ultimate goal is to eradicate this pest from North America.

To date, USDA has spent more than \$100 million on research, eradication and reforestation efforts. USDA estimates that if EAB is not contained or eradicated, it has the potential to cost state and local governments approximately \$7 billion over the next 25 years to remove and replace dead and dying ash trees that can pose a safety hazard in urban and suburban areas.

Today's federal order restricts the interstate movement of regulated articles that originate within the quarantine area. Regulated articles include ash nursery stock and green lumber; any other ash material including logs, stumps, roots, branches, as well as composted and uncomposted wood chips. Due to the difficulty in distinguishing between species of hardwood firewood, all hardwood firewood, including ash, oak, maple and hickory are regulated articles.

Three years of EAB survey data support the need to implement strict regulations for the movement of host material. Survey methods are not 100 percent effective for early detection of the pest, and given this uncertainty, the possibility of spreading EAB in unprocessed host material presents a serious risk that requires immediate action.

APHIS is working closely with the states affected with EAB and those border states to address this invasive species. The federal interstate movement restrictions associated with the quarantine augments state quarantines in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio that regulate the movement of firewood and ash wood products within those states.

APHIS also works cooperatively with state agriculture and forestry agencies, universities, landscape, nursery, and other affected industries and the international scientific community to develop strategies for the detection, control and eradication of EAB.

EAB is an invasive species wood boring beetle, native to China and eastern Asia, which targets ash trees. EAB probably arrived in North America hidden in wood packing materials commonly used to ship consumer and other goods. It was first detected in July 2002 in southeastern Michigan and has since been found in Ohio, Indiana, Maryland and Illinois.

Everyday human activity facilitates the long distance spread of EAB, expanding the extent and range of the infestation in North America. The movement of ash tree products has been found to advance the spread of EAB. Currently, EAB is responsible for the death and decline of more 25 million ash trees in the United States.

For more information on EAB and APHIS' expanded quarantine, please visit www.aphis.usda.gov.

#

Note to Reporters: USDA news releases, program announcements and media advisories are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS news release page at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom>. Also, anyone with an e-mail address can sign up to receive APHIS press releases automatically. Send an e-mail message to lyris@mdrdlyriss10.aphis.usda.gov and leave the subject blank. In the message, type "subscribe press_releases."