

FOR INFORMATION
DA-2006-29
June 26, 2006

SUBJECT: Emerald Ash Borer in Illinois

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

On June 9, 2006, APHIS confirmed the detection of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in Illinois for the first time. A homeowner in a rural subdivision near Lily Lake, about 40 miles west of Chicago in central Kane County, discovered the beetle and alerted APHIS officials. The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) was notified that the suspect insect was sent to our EAB field laboratory in Michigan for confirmatory identification. Once the insect was identified as EAB, IDOA nursery inspectors visited the residential subdivision where the specimen was found and subsequently discovered several infested ash trees in the immediate neighborhood in addition to evidence of an infestation in an adjacent area.

APHIS and IDOA officials have already begun delimiting survey activities to determine the extent of the EAB infestation in Kane County. As of June 21, 2006, they had confirmed that the infestation is at least one mile in diameter, and delimiting surveys will continue outward from this area. APHIS and State officials will also conduct detection surveys in the nine counties surrounding Kane County, which include areas in Wisconsin. In addition, the program will conduct an inventory of nurseries, campgrounds, and other high-priority sites, such as new residential or recent commercial developments with ash tree landscaping.

APHIS and Illinois officials will use several survey methods, including basic visual surveys, tree climbers, and destructive sampling, in order to thoroughly investigate the area for the presence of the pest. Program officials will conduct tracebacks and traceforwards at infested nurseries to locate areas that may have received potentially infested ash nursery stock. All infested trees will be removed. Based on the results of the surveys, the program will determine whether additional trees will be removed to prevent further pest spread.

In addition to survey, regulatory, and control activities, the program is planning an aggressive outreach and education campaign to enlist the support and cooperation of homeowners and businesses. EAB can be spread easily through the movement of firewood and ash nursery stock. Public awareness and assistance will be critical in encouraging residents to report possible beetle damage in their area, as well as in preventing the spread of this insect through the movement of regulated articles.

APHIS and IDOA will quarantine affected areas in Illinois to prevent additional pest spread. APHIS is preparing an interim rule for publication in the *Federal Register* to implement a quarantine of Kane County to prevent the movement of host materials (nursery stock, firewood, etc.) out of the area.

/s/

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