

FOR INFORMATION  
DA-2010-55  
November 12, 2010

SUBJECT: First U.S. Detection of Red Palm Weevil, *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*, in California

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

On October 15, 2010, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the detection of a dead red palm weevil (RPW), *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*, in a canary island palm tree stump. A local arborist reported the find in a residential area of Laguna Beach, Orange County, California. This is the first detection of RPW in the United States.

APHIS is working closely with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to determine the source and the extent of any potential infestation. On October 26, CDFAs inspectors found a single live adult RPW in a canary palm tree approximately 100 meters away from the original detection in Laguna Beach. Inspectors were alerted to the presence of several cocoons around the tree.

Cooperative delimiting surveys around the detection site in Laguna Beach continue and detection surveys are being developed for nearby nurseries. APHIS convened a technical working group, consisting of Federal, State, and industry experts, to evaluate the current science of the pest and to address specific questions upon which an effective response will be developed.

RPW is a large, reddish-brown weevil with a life cycle ranging from 45 to 139 days, depending on temperature. The female weevil lays eggs in wounds, cracks, and crevices from which the legless larvae hatch and burrow into the plant. Adult weevils are predominantly active during the day and are capable of long distance flight (> 900 m) to locate hosts or breeding sites. RPW is a concealed feeding pest that is difficult to detect during early stages of infestation. The feeding of the weevil in the growing points of the palm causes tree death. RPW is known to occur in Africa, Europe, Oceania, North America, and the Caribbean. Its host range includes *Areaceae*, *Poaceae*, and *Agavaceae*, with palms being its primary host.

As per reporting requirements under IPPC standards, this detection of *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* is considered to be transient, actionable, and under surveillance.

For additional information, you may contact Craig Southwick, Western Regional Program Manager, at (970) 494-7578, or Valerie DeFeo, National Program Manager, at (301) 734-3393.

*/s/ Rebecca A. Bech*

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