

FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION
DA-2012-42
October 19, 2012

SUBJECT: APHIS Removes Regulated Areas in Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy Counties, Texas for the Mexican Fruit Fly, *Anastrepha ludens*

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

Effective September 26, 2012, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) removed the last Mexican fruit fly (Mexfly) regulated area from the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. As a result, there are no remaining Mexfly-regulated areas in Texas.

On March 9, 2012, APHIS designated portions of Cameron County as a fruit fly-regulated area restricting the interstate movement of regulated articles from that area in order to prevent the spread of Mexfly to noninfested areas of the United States. Subsequently, additional infestations were detected in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties in Texas that ultimately led to APHIS establishing regulated areas in those counties totaling 1,062 square miles. Since then, APHIS has worked cooperatively with the Texas Department of Agriculture and the Texas Citrus Industry to eradicate the transient Mexfly populations through various control actions, including the application of sterile insect technique by releasing sterile male Mexflies in the area surrounding the detection sites, fruit removal from infested areas, and using foliar bait sprays near the detection sites.

Deregulation was concluded after sufficient time passed without finding additional Mexflies in those areas. Specifically, an intensified fruit fly trap surveillance system was deployed and monitored for three life cycles and calculated through a modeling process specific for Mexfly. Accordingly, on August 7, 2012, APHIS began removing the regulated areas with the last area of Weslaco/San Benito removed on September 26, 2012.

This action is reflected on the following designated website, which contains a description of all the current Federal fruit fly regulated areas:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/fruit_flies/regulated.shtml

For additional information, please contact John Stewart, APHIS Exotic Fruit Fly Manager, Fruit Fly Exclusion and Detection Programs, at (919) 855-7426.

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