

Subject: Detection of Old World Bollworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*) in Florida

To: State and Territory Agricultural Regulatory Officials

In late June and early July 2015, APHIS confirmed the detection of three adult male Old World bollworms (OWB): two were from the same trap at a tomato farm and one was from a separate trap on a vacant lot near a park in Bradenton, Manatee County, Florida. These are the first detections of OWB in the continental United States.

APHIS and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) are surveying a nine square-mile area surrounding the detection sites to determine if this is an isolated incident. In addition, APHIS and FDACS are conducting Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS)-related surveys for OWB in neighboring counties. Through CAPS, APHIS and as many as 27 state partners, including Florida, have surveyed for old world bollworm for more than ten years with negative results.

APHIS and FDACS are also conducting trace backs, trace forwards, and other outreach activities. In addition, APHIS and FDACS will work with trade representatives and state plant regulatory officials as these surveys and related activities continue.

OWB is found in many countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, and the islands of the Western Pacific Region, and has recently become established in Brazil and Argentina. It is considered a severe economic pest in most places where it occurs. OWB feeds on many types of plants and can affect 180 species of wild and cultivated plants in more than 45 families. Major hosts include:

artichokes	okra
beans and forage legumes	peas
bell peppers	potatoes
cacao	rice, sorghum, and sugarcane
chrysanthemums	sunflowers
cotton	tobacco
maize, wheat, and other small grains	tomatoes

OWB is related to the corn earworm, *Helicoverpa zea*, which is widespread in the United States. The adult moths of these two pests can be distinguished using morphological characters; however, the larvae of corn earworm and OWB cannot be distinguished without DNA analysis.

For additional information on OWB, please contact APHIS National Emergency Response Coordinator Eileen Smith at 301-851-2155. Further information may also be found at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-health/owb>.

/s/

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