FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Site Specific Environmental Assessment
Rangeland Mormon Cricket Suppression Program Idaho
EA Number ID-06-01

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzes alternatives for suppressing Mormon cricket outbreaks on federally managed rangeland in southern Idaho. The EA, incorporated by reference in this document, is available from USDA APHIS PPQ, 9134 W. Blackeagle Drive, Boise, ID 83709.

The EA includes an analysis of the potential impacts of four alternatives. These alternatives include (1) No Action, (2) Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates and Complete Area Coverage, (3) Reduced Agent Area Treatments (RAATs), and (4) Modified Reduced Agent Area Treatments (MRAATs). The preferred alternative is MRAATs.

Either carbaryl bait or diflubenzuron spray would be considered under the preferred alternative at the following application rates:

- 10.0 pounds (0.50 lb a.i.) of 5 percent carbaryl bait per acre;
- 10.0 pounds (0.20 lb a.i.) of 2 percent carbaryl bait per acre; or
- 0.75 fluid ounce (0.012 lb a.i.) of diflubenzuron per acre.

Aerial applications of bait or spray would be made to no more than 50% of the land area within any specific treatment block (treat one swath and skip one swath), and would usually be made to 20% of the land area within any specific treatment block (treat one swath and skip four swaths).

Ground applications of bait would be made to no more than 50% of the land area within any specific treatment block, and may be made to as little as <1% of the land area within any specific treatment block. Ground applications would normally be made to existing roadsides and trailsides, but might be made off roads or trails with the concurrence of land managers.

APHIS' participation in this suppression program is based on potential damage such as reduction of critical forage and habitat for some species of wildlife and livestock, destruction of rangeland revegetation projects, creation of public nuisances, and endangerment of road traffic; and benefits of treatments including protection of forage and habitat, increased probability of success for rangeland revegetation projects, elimination of public nuisances, and prevention of hazards to road traffic. Some populations may not cause substantial damage to native rangeland yet may require suppression to prevent damage to high economic value crops on adjacent private land. The goal of the proposed suppression program would be to reduce Mormon cricket outbreak population levels in order to protect rangeland ecosystems and/or private cropland adjacent to rangeland.

APHIS has determined that the proposed suppression program utilizing the MRAATs Alternative, conducted in accordance with the Guidelines for Treatment of Rangeland Grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets (treatment guidelines), which contains the operational procedures, will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

The finding of no significant impacts for the MRAATs alternative was determined based on the following:

1. Human health-- Potential exposures to the general public from MRAATs application rates are infrequent and of low magnitude. These low exposures to the public pose no risk of direct toxicity, carcinogenicity, neurotoxicity, genotoxicity, reproductive toxicity, or developmental toxicity. APHIS will offer the opportunity for hypersensitive individuals to register a request that treatments not occur near their property. The potential for adverse effects to workers is negligible if proper safety procedures are followed, including wearing the required protective clothing. Therefore, routine safety precautions are expected to provide adequate worker health protection.

2. Nontargets—No vertebrate animal species would be exposed to toxic levels of insecticides. Reduction in insects as prey species for insectivores would be reduced by the insecticide choices and by the reduction in area coverage. Plants would not be exposed to toxic levels of insecticides and any reduction of pollinators would be minor and temporary due to the insecticide choices and by the reduction in area coverage. Impacts on aquatic arthropods would be avoided or minimized by utilizing buffers around water. Impacts on non-target terrestrial arthropods would be minimized by the insecticide choices and by the reduction in area coverage.

3. Endangered and threatened species-- Protection measures that resulted from the national and local consultation processes with US Fish and Wildlife Service will be implemented and therefore, the proposed suppression program is not likely to adversely affect endangered or threatened species or their habitats.

4. Socioeconomic issues-- Losses caused by Mormon crickets would not be as significant under the preferred alternative as under the No Action Alternative.

5. Cultural resources and events-- There would be no significant impact on cultural resources or events.

6. Executive Orders 12898 (low income and minorities), 13045 (children), and 13186 (migratory birds)-- The Program actions pose no disproportionate adverse impacts to children or to low-income or minority populations. There would be no significant impact on migratory birds.

Corrections to errors and omissions discovered after printing the EA have been published as Addendum 1 to the EA.

The time between the receipt of a request for treatment and the start of a suppression program is very short. In order to inform the public and give them time to submit comments on the

proposed program, APHIS made this EA available for a 30-day comment period which ended March 17, 2006. Comments and the APHIS response are attached to the EA as Addendum 2. Once a treatment request is received and it has been determined that a suppression program will take place, APHIS will re-examine potential program effects on the quality of the human environment. If changes need to be made to the EA, this FONSI, or the Treatment Guidelines; a Supplement describing the changes will be prepared. The supplement(s) will be provided to all parties who request it/them.

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the EA, the implementation of the treatment guidelines (containing the operational procedures) and the protection measures for endangered and threatened species, I have determined that the proposed suppression program utilizing the MRAATs alternative will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

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C. David McNeal, Jr. Date
State Plant Health Director
Idaho