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USDA APHIS Expands Imported Fire Ant Quarantine Areas

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has issued a Federal Order for the expansion of quarantine areas for the existing imported fire ant quarantine areas in Arkansas.

Effective immediately, APHIS is adding the following seven counties to the quarantine areas for imported fire ants: Cross, Franklin, Johnson, Lee, Monroe, St. Francis, and Woodruff. A map indicating the existing and updated quarantine areas can be found at agriculture.arkansas.gov/plant-industries/regulatory-section/quarantines/.

Imported fire ants are commonly transported by nursery stock, grass sod, hay, and straw. Anyone transporting a regulated article from the quarantine areas to outside of the quarantine areas must have a certificate or compliance agreement from the Arkansas Department of Agriculture to ensure that no fire ants are moved along with these items. The quarantine applies to the following:

- Nurseries in the quarantine areas shipping plants with soil outside the quarantine area.
- Landscapers and nurseries picking up plants in the quarantine area and bringing them outside of the quarantine area.
- Landscapers and nurseries within the quarantine area that are moving plants from the quarantine area for landscaping jobs outside of the quarantine area.
- Grass sod growers in the quarantine area shipping sod outside the quarantine area.
- Landscapers bringing sod from the quarantine area to outside the quarantine area.
- Bailed hay and straw which is shipped from the quarantine area to outside the quarantine area.

APHIS is taking these actions based upon verification from the Arkansas Department of Agriculture that imported fire ants are present and established in the areas listed. This Federal Order is issued pursuant to the regulatory authority provided by the Plant Protection Act of June 20, 2000, as amended, Section 412 (a), 7 U.S.C. 7712 (a). The Act authorizes the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to prohibit or restrict the movement in interstate commerce of any plant, plant part, or article if the Secretary determines the prohibition or restriction is necessary to prevent the dissemination of a plant pest within the United States.

For more information about imported fire ants, visit agriculture.arkansas.gov/plant-industries/regulatory-section/imported-fire-ant-program/.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit www.agriculture.arkansas.gov/.