

FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION
DA-2012-01
January 9, 2012

SUBJECT: *Anastrepha ludens* (Mexican fruit fly) – Removal of Quarantine Area in Hidalgo County, Texas

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

Effective January 3, 2012, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) removed Hidalgo County, Texas, as a Mexican fruit fly (Mexfly) quarantine area. As a result, there are no remaining Mexfly quarantine areas in the United States.

Since 1927, portions of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV), including Hidalgo County, has been designated as a fruit fly quarantine area, which placed restrictions on the interstate movement of regulated articles from those areas in order to prevent the spread of Mexfly. In 2007, APHIS changed its strategy from pest suppression to eradication and began working with the Texas Department of Agriculture and the Texas citrus industry to eliminate Mexfly populations from the LRGV. Through this cooperative effort, APHIS conducted various control activities, including the application of sterile insect technique by releasing sterile male Mexflies in the LRGV, including Hidalgo County, and using foliar bait sprays near the detection sites.

Eradication was concluded in Hidalgo County, the remaining infested county in the LRGV, after sufficient time passed without finding additional Mexfly populations in those areas. Specifically, an intensified fruit fly trap surveillance system was deployed and monitored for 1 year based upon international standard criteria. Accordingly, APHIS removed Hidalgo County as a Mexfly quarantine area on January 3, 2012. This removal of the quarantine area is reflected on the following designated website, which contains a description of all the current Federal fruit fly quarantine areas:

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

APHIS anticipates following this action with the publication of a notice in the *Federal Register* informing the public of this change. For additional information on the removal of the quarantine area for Mexfly, you may contact Wayne Burnett, APHIS Exotic Fruit Fly Director, Fruit Fly Exclusion and Detection Programs, at Area Code (301) 734-4387.

/s/ **Osama El-Lissy** /for

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