FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program Environmental Assessment in Eastern Oregon (Except Klamath County)

EA Number OR-06-01

In June 2002 the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service completed an Environmental Impact Statement entitled "Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program, Environmental Impact Statement" (EIS) concerning suppression of grasshopper populations in 17 western states. The EIS describes the actions available to APHIS to reduce the destruction caused by grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations. APHIS' authority to participate in grasshopper suppression activities stems from Section 417 of the Plant Protection Act of 2000 (7 U.S.C. Part 7717). This statute directs APHIS to control actual or potential economic grasshopper and Mormon cricket outbreaks on Federal, State or private lands subject to the availability of funds and at the request of a State or Federal land manager.

In conjunction with the EIS, APHIS has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzes alternatives for suppressing grasshopper and Mormon cricket outbreaks on rangeland in Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, and, Wheeler Counties, Oregon. The EA and EIS, incorporated by reference in this document, are available from USDA, APHIS, PPQ, 6135 NE 80th Avenue, Suite A-5, Portland, Oregon 97218-4033.

The EA includes an analysis of the potential impacts of three alternatives. They included (1) No Action, (2) Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates and Complete Area Coverage, (3) Reduced Agent Area Treatments (RAATs). As outlined in the EA, after the program receives a treatment request and determines that treatment is warranted, the specific treatment site within the proposed suppression area is extensively examined and the EA is supplemented, if necessary. APHIS' participation in this suppression program is based the potential damage caused by outbreaks of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets such as reduction of critical forage and habitat for some species of wildlife, the destruction of rangeland revegetation projects, the economic impact to livestock operations that depend on forage, and the creation of public nuisances. The benefits of treatments include the protection of forage and habitat, the increased probability of success of revegetation projects, the reduced economic impact to ranchers from forage loss, and the elimination of public nuisances. Some populations that may not cause substantial damage to native rangeland may require treatment due to the secondary suppression benefits resulting from the high value of adjacent crops. The goal of the proposed suppression program analyzed in this EA is to reduce grasshopper populations to an acceptable level in order to protect

rangeland ecosystems and/or cropland adjacent to rangeland.

APHIS has determined that the proposed suppression program, conducted in accordance with the 2006 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 was determined on the following:

1. Human health - Potential exposures to the general public from program application rates are infrequent and of low magnitude. The low levels of exposure pose no risk of direct toxicity, carcinogenicity, nuerotoxicity, genotoxicity, reproductive toxicity, or developmental impacts to the public. APHIS will inform the public well in advance of any programs to allow hypersensitive individuals to request exclusion from the treatment area. 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 and program guidelines are expected to provide adequate public, and worker health protection.

2. Nontargets - No vertebrate animal species would be exposed to toxic levels of insecticide from any of the alternatives. Any of the alternatives could result in reduction of prey species for insectivores. However this reduction will be minimized by the insecticide and alternative choices. Plants would not be exposed to toxic levels of insecticide, and any reduction in pollinators would be minimized by following program guidelines. Impacts on aquatic arthropods will be avoided or minimized by utilizing buffers around water. Impacts to non-target terrestrial arthropods will be minimized by insecticide and alternative choices. Water and selected sensitive sites in or near treatment blocks will be monitored according to APHIS Environmental Monitoring Plan and in consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the land owner/manager.

3. Endangered and threatened species - Protection measures agreed to in national and local consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries will be implemented and therefore, any proposed suppression program is not likely to adversely affect listed threatened or endangered species or their habitats.

4. Socioeconomic issues -- Negative socioeconomic impacts would be minimized by the implementation of the Treatment Guidelines.

5. Cultural resources and events – Advance notice to the public and Tribes will provide the opportunity to identify and avoid significant impact to cultural resources and events.

6. Executive Orders C12898 low income and minorities), 13045 (children), and 13186 (migratory birds) – Low income, minority, and youth population will not be put at risk by any of the alternatives when guidelines are followed. Program guidelines will assure no significant impact to migratory birds.

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 is making this EA available at this time, with a 30 day comment period. Once a treatment request is received and it has been determined that a suppression program will take place, APHIS will prepare a supplemental determination to re-examine potential program effects on the quality of the human environment and address any comments received during the comment period. The supplemental determination will be provided to all parties that commented on the EA.

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 will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

Name
State Plant Health Director

3/15/06
Date