Calendar Year 2010 Amendment to
Finding of No Significant Impact
for
Asian Citrus Psyllid Control Research Project in Hidalgo County, Texas
Environmental Assessment
January, 2009

In January 2009, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzed potential environmental consequences of implementing an Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) control research project in citrus groves and residential properties in Hidalgo County, Texas. The EA looked at approximately 4,100 acres, of which 1,400 were to be treated. The proposed 2010 program is a continuation of that program—it would treat approximately 4,700 acres in an overlapping but slightly larger area than was considered in 2009. The attached map compares the 2009 and 2010 areas. The larger area is not anticipated to result in additional or more severe environmental or human health impacts than was anticipated in the original EA because most of the area is overlapping with the area evaluated in 2009. The area which was not evaluated previously is essentially identical to the areas that were evaluated.

The EA discussed four chemical treatment options available to citrus growers and two chemical treatment options available to homeowners. Each treatment option for citrus growers consisted of a single pesticide application made four to five times from mid-February 2009 to September 2009. The single application could be an aerial or ground foliar application of fenpropathrin, imidacloprid, zeta-cypermethrin, chlorpyrifos, pyrethrin, kaolin clay, citrus oil, or neem oil, or a soil application of aldicarb (soil incorporation by burial) or imidacloprid (soil incorporation by injection or tablet). Each treatment option for homeowners consisted of a single pesticide application made three separate times. The single application could be a ground foliar application (with hand-held sprayers) of pyrethrin, citrus oil, neem oil, or kaolin clay, or a soil application (via soil injection or tablets) of imidacloprid.

The proposed 2010 program would use the same pesticides as 2009 except that aldicarb would no longer be included in the program. Other alterations for treatment of commercial orchards are designed to add flexibility and compatibility with ongoing grower pest management programs. There would be two coordinated aerial spray applications to knock down ACP populations: one would be just prior to flush in early February, and the second would occur in the mid-October to mid-November timeframe. Subsequent sprays during the primary growing season would consist of the grower's normal pest management regime. The spray regime for abandoned groves present within the project area would be a pre-flush spray with fenpropathrin, a May/June application of imidacloprid, a July/August application of zeta cypermethrin, and a fall application of chlorpyrifos.

While APHIS did provide a public comment period in order that the public could respond to the January 2009 EA, no comments were received. However, based upon information provided to APHIS from FWS, this EA was updated in February, 2009. It is incorporated by reference in this document, and is available at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/ea/citrusgreening.shtml and from—

U.S. Department of Agriculture   or   U.S. Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service   Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Plant Protection and Quarantine   Plant Protection and Quarantine
Domestic and Emergency Operations   320 North Main Street, Suite 119
Emergency Management   McAllen, TX 78501
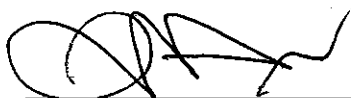4700 River Road, Unit 134
Riverdale, MD 20737–1236

The EA analyzed alternatives consisting of (1) not conducting an ACP control research project (no action alternative), and (2) conducting an ACP control research project (proposed action alternative). The impacts to human health, other nontarget organisms, and environmental quality (including soil, water, and air) were analyzed for each chemical treatment.

APHIS' finding of no significant impact for the proposed research project is based upon the limited environmental impacts, as expressed in the EA. Adherence to product label language, including the use of personal protection equipment and ensuring adequate buffer zones from water, preclude significant impacts to humans, other nontarget organisms, and the environment (i.e., soil, water, and air).

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and its implementing regulations require Federal agencies to ensure that their actions are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. In 2009, after informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), APHIS determined that the program would have no effect on the Texas ayenia and star cactus. APHIS also determined that the program may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the Gulf Coast jaguarundi, northern aplomado falcon, ocelot, and Walker's manioc. On February 9, 2009, FWS concurred with this determination. In December 2009, APHIS asked FWS to concur with our determinations of no effect and not likely to adversely effect the same listed species for the proposed expanded pilot program. After reviewing the expanded program, FWS concurred with APHIS' findings in a letter dated December 29, 2009.

There are no disproportionate adverse effects anticipated to minorities, low-income populations, or children, in accordance with Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," and Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks."

Lastly, because I have not found evidence of significant environmental impact associated with this program, I find that an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared and that this program may be implemented.

_____
George Nash
Plant Protection and Quarantine
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Attachment

1/14/10
_____
Date

Edinburg

McAllen

281

336

107
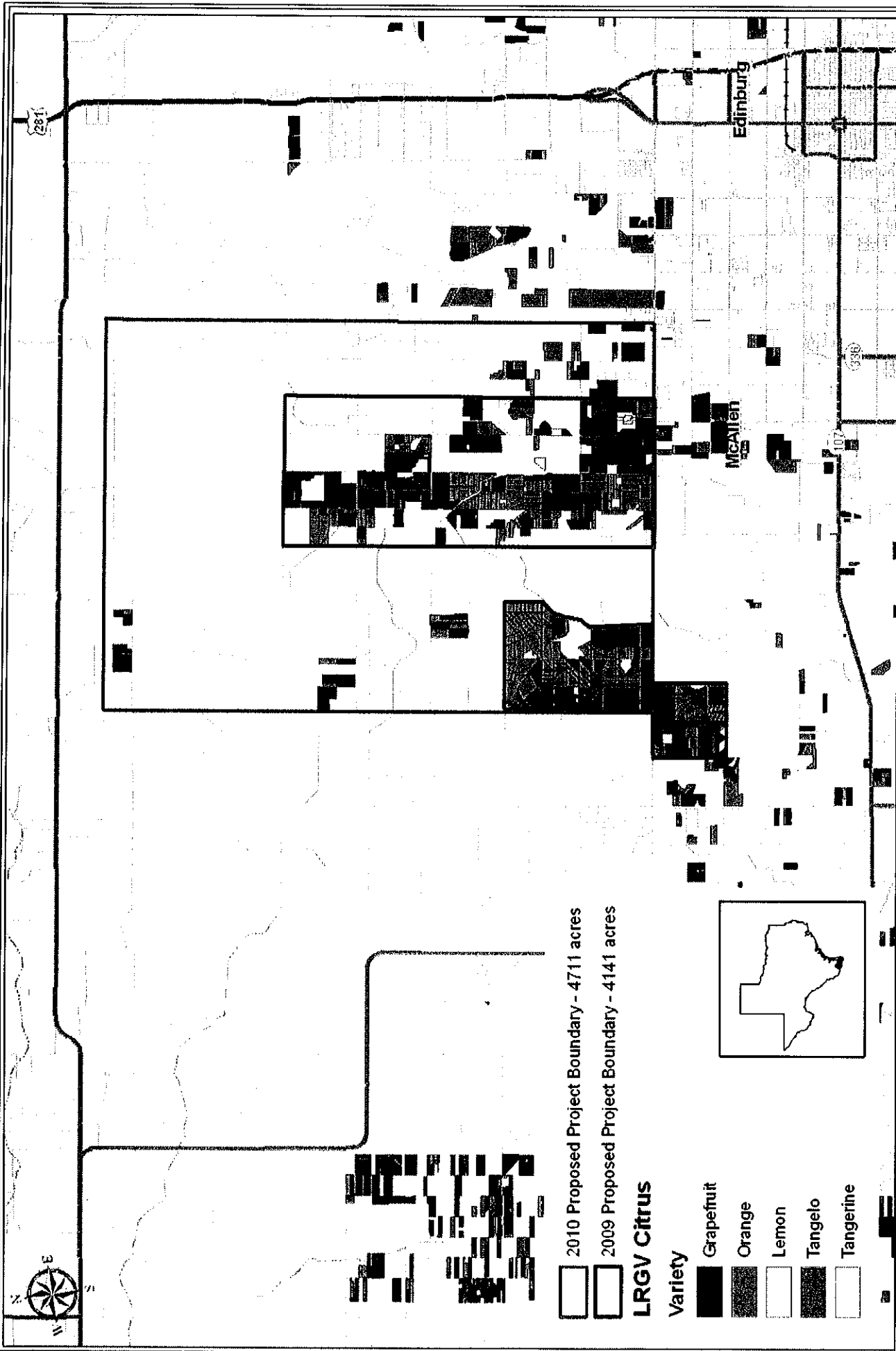
2010 Proposed Project Boundary - 4711 acres

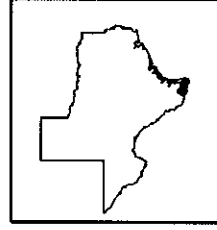2009 Proposed Project Boundary - 4141 acres

LRGV Citrus

Variety

Grapefruit

Orange

Lemon

Tangelo

Tangerine

USDA APHIS PPQ CPHST - Mission Lab

Created by: David Bartels

Date: 11 Dec 2009

Source: USDA APHIS PPQ CPHST Citrus Survey 2008

Proposed Citrus Acerage
Area Wide ACP Management Project
Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas

USDA APHIS

GIS & Remote Sensing

Mission Laboratory
Edinburg, Texas