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Wolf Administration, USDA, Penn State Tour Lancaster County, Highlighting How PA Farm Bill Will Help Battle Spotted Lanternfly

Lancaster, PA – On the heels of the first Spotted Lanternfly hatch of the season, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding was joined by representatives from USDA and Penn State. Officials outlined how the proposed PA Rapid Response Disaster Readiness Account in the PA Farm Bill will expand efforts to contain the destructive pest. They also toured Lancaster-based Central Penn Transportation and Lancaster County Central Park for a demonstration of control methods.

“Spotted Lanternfly threatens Pennsylvania’s economy, our ability to transport goods, and simply enjoy being outdoors,” said Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding. “We have slowed the spread of this destructive pest by working strategically as a team. The investments proposed in the PA Farm Bill will help ensure that we are positioned to combat other pest and disease threats.”

Under the PA Farm Bill--a package of legislation designed to expand and protect agriculture infrastructure--the Pennsylvania Rapid Response Disaster Readiness Account will provide \$5 million in funding to allow for a quick response to agricultural disasters, which includes \$3 million to employ animal or plant health officials to contain a disease outbreak or invasive insect threat. Additionally, USDA recently dedicated more than \$6.2 million in new funding to Pennsylvania’s efforts.

In May 2018, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) introduced the Spotted Lanternfly permit system to train businesses and employees on recognizing the life stages of the Spotted Lanternfly. As of May 2019, the department has issued nearly 370,000 permits to businesses that travel in and out of the quarantine area.

“With a year of research under our belt, we can now provide growers and homeowners with more specific recommendations on how to control Spotted Lanternfly” said Rick Roush, Dean of the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences. “It is imperative for businesses and the public to engage in management strategies if we hope to get this pest under control.”

In the coming weeks, PDA compliance and enforcement teams will contact businesses and join the State Police at regular commercial vehicle checkpoints to perform roadside permit checks. PDA's goal is to raise awareness among businesses who don't have permits and get them to voluntarily join efforts to stop Spotted Lanternflies from spreading.

Continuing the strategy used in 2018, PDA and USDA teams will assess and treat high-risk properties. Survey teams will scout for insects throughout the state after receiving reports of sightings outside of the quarantine area. PSU Extension will continue to staff the hotline, and conduct outreach and research.

“APHIS remains committed to this fight and we are in it for the long haul,” said Kevin Shea, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services Administrator. “Our goal is to detect, contain, control, and suppress Spotted Lanternfly populations and help safeguard agricultural industries here in Pennsylvania and surrounding states. Working together with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and Penn State, we will continue carrying out an area-wide integrated pest management strategy, including detection surveys, control measures to treat the pest and its preferred host, and outreach activities. We are also partnering with research entities to develop detection tools and techniques, test control measures, and explore potential biological control options for use in the cooperative program.”

Businesses can obtain a spotted lanternfly permit at <https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly-permit-training>. Homeowners with questions about treatment, including approved sprays, can learn more through Penn State Extension at <http://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly>.

For more information on Spotted Lanternfly, visit www.agriculture.pa.gov/spottedlanternfly.

MEDIA CONTACT: Shannon Powers, 717-783-2628

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