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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ohio Agriculture Department Expands Emerald Ash Borer Quarantine to Include Lorain and Medina Counties

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Oct. 11, 2006) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture announced today the expansion of the state’s Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) quarantine to include Lorain and Medina counties. Officials expanded the quarantine to halt the movement of ash tree material and all hardwood firewood out of areas where the ash tree-killing insect was recently discovered.

Department officials, while examining detection trees across the state, discovered an infested ash tree in Lorain County on the Ohio Turnpike near the Cuyahoga County line and in Medina County just south of U.S Route 224 on Interstate 71. As a result, Lorain and Medina counties are now entirely quarantined to stop the continued spread of the pest through potentially infested materials. It is illegal to move ash trees, parts of an ash tree, and all hardwood firewood out of quarantined areas.

Currently, department officials are inspecting statewide detection trees – ash trees that have been stressed by removing a ring of bark – to look for EAB populations resulting from the movement of firewood or ash tree materials. The survey should be completed around the beginning of next year. At that point, the statewide picture will be assessed to see if any limited, targeted tree cutting may be used to help slow the spread of the pest.

In the meantime, newly discovered areas of infestation will be quarantined to stop the artificial spread of EAB through ash tree materials and firewood. Citizens can freely move hardwood firewood and ash trees within quarantined counties and contiguously quarantined areas, but cannot take these potentially infested materials outside of the regulated areas. Violators face fines up to \$4,000.

Firewood dealers, businesses, or woodlot owners interested in marketing and transporting ash trees or firewood out of quarantined areas can do so only with a department-approved compliance agreement. These agreements stipulate handling practices that mitigate the spread of EAB.

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Since it was first discovered in Ohio in 2003, EAB has been identified in 22 counties: Auglaize, Cuyahoga, Delaware, Defiance, Erie, Franklin, Fulton, Hancock, Henry, Huron, Lorain, Lucas, Marion, Medina, Miami, Sandusky, Seneca, Ottawa, Warren, Williams, Wood, and Wyandot counties. All or parts of these counties have been quarantined to stop the movement of firewood and ash logs, which are the largest contributors to the spread of EAB.

Ash trees infested with EAB typically die within five years. The pest belongs to a group of metallic wood-boring beetles. Adults are dark green, one-half inch in length and one-eighth inch wide, and fly only from early May until September. Larvae spend the rest of the year beneath the bark of ash trees, and when they emerge as adults, leave D-shaped exit holes in the bark about one-eighth inch wide.

For more information on EAB, compliance information, or for the latest quarantine map, go to www.ohioagriculture.gov/eab, or call 1-888-OHIO-EAB.

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