



For immediate release

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Eastern New Mexico in-shell pecan weevil quarantine rule takes effect Nov. 20

Las Cruces, N.M. – The New Mexico Department of Agriculture will issue an emergency pecan weevil quarantine effective Nov. 20 for a duration of 180 days for Chaves, Curry, Eddy, and Lea counties. The quarantine is issued as a result of the continued findings of pecan weevil in residential pecan trees in Hobbs, Lovington, Roswell, Clovis, Artesia and in several commercial southeastern New Mexico orchards.

The primary objective of the quarantine is to prevent the spread of pecan weevil by providing restrictions on the export of in-shell pecans grown in those counties. During the 180 days, input from the pecan industry will continue to be accepted by NMDA for possible incorporation into a permanent quarantine.

Although the objective of the quarantine is to prevent the spread of pecan weevil out of known infested counties, New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture Jeff Witte said work continues to remove pecan weevil from residential and commercial trees.

“At this time, we are working with local pest control companies on expanding removal efforts in Artesia, Roswell and Clovis,” said Witte.

In-shell pecans that are destined to other New Mexico counties from quarantined counties require either cold treatment prior to shipment or transportation in sealed containers directly to an NMDA-approved cold storage facility. Transportation in sealed trailers or containers prevents pecan weevils from emerging from nuts and dropping to the ground where they may infest a new area of the state. Freezing pecan weevil for an extend period of time will kill the pest.

Pecan weevil is primarily spread through the movement of in-shell pecans and infested equipment. Additional quarantine restrictions apply to equipment and treatments. If the in-shell

pecans are shipped to another state, restrictions for the receiving state should be verified by contacting the respective department of agriculture.

NMDA and New Mexico Pecan Growers Association are asking homeowners with pecan trees to carefully look at their pecans for signs of pecan weevil infestation in order to reduce the movement of pecan weevil within the quarantined counties. A number of websites are available to help individuals determine if their pecans are infested with pecan weevil, including the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service website at http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_circulars/CR683.pdf.

NMDA asks homeowners to destroy pecan weevils in infested pecans by freezing the pecans for a period of seven days or crushing the nuts. Homeowners should also call NMDA at 575-646-3007 or their local Cooperative Extension Service office, which may be found at <http://aces.nmsu.edu/county/>. Homeowners are also being asked to ensure they are not contributing to the spread of pecan weevil to neighbors or other towns by moving infested pecans.

To help identify pecan weevil infested locations and ensure compliance with the quarantine, pecan buyers or accumulators are required to collect information from the seller. Information required for each transaction includes seller's contact information, physical location of where nuts were grown and amount of nuts purchased.

New Mexico's exterior pecan weevil quarantine that was enacted in 1997 restricts the movement of in-shell pecans originating in all states except Arizona, California and the Texas counties of El Paso and Hudspeth, and parts of Culberson County.

Economic Impact of Pecan

Phillip Arnold, New Mexico Pecan Growers Association President said pecans are vital to the New Mexico agricultural economy.

"Pecan production is now New Mexico's number one crop, with respect to cash receipts," said Arnold. "We have over 2,000 pecan farms in the state and an unknown number of homeowners with pecan trees that are also an important part of the business."

The 2017 pecan crop forecast for New Mexico is a record 79 million pounds.

Western pecan growers consider pecan weevil the most significant pest of pecans. Pecan weevil establishment in commercial pecan orchards results in increased production costs, crop loss, reductions in nut quality, increased use of insecticides.

Because of its significant impact on pecan production, NMDA and the Western Pecan Growers Association have worked over the past 40 years to prevent pecan weevil from establishing in the state and to prevent the movement of pecan weevil. During the past eight years, NMDA has worked with contractors and growers to remove pecan weevil from specific neighborhoods and

orchards in eastern New Mexico. Once initiated, removal of pecan weevil from an infested area or tree may take up to seven years or more.

History of Pecan Weevil

For over 30 years, New Mexico has seen periodic introductions of pecan weevil, which have been eradicated each time with the help of the pecan industry. It was determined last year that pecan weevil had spread from known areas of active eradication, which resulted in an emergency quarantine rule taking effect Jan. 27, 2017. The quarantine was directed at protecting New Mexico's pecan industry from additional spread of pecan weevil to uninfested pecan-growing counties.

Who to Contact

NMSU Extension is collaborating with NMDA and Western Pecan Growers Association to provide outreach and education to the affected communities. To contact your local extension agent, visit <http://aces.nmsu.edu/county/>. A copy of the quarantine rule may be found at www.nmda.nmsu.edu or by calling 575-646-3007. The draft quarantine is subject to change as industry continues to provide input.

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