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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ohio Agriculture Department Finds Emerald Ash Borer in Putnam County *Department Officials Quarantine Putnam and Six Nearby Counties*

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (April 2, 2008) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) today expanded the state's Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) quarantine area to include Putnam and six nearby counties. The state's quarantine, which is designed to slow the spread of the ash tree-killing insect, prohibits the movement of ash trees, parts of an ash tree, and all hardwood firewood out of infested areas.

After receiving a tip from an Ohio Department of Natural Resources urban forester, ODA officials discovered an infested ash tree at a residential property in Blanchard Township in Putnam County. The EAB find was located near the intersection of County Road 5 and Township Road I, about three miles northeast of Ottawa. While neighboring counties have been under quarantine, this is Putnam County's first known EAB infestation.

To reduce the risk of the insect moving to uninfested parts of the state, the department added six more counties to the quarantine list: Champaign, Crawford, Darke, Preble, Shelby, and Van Wert.

Department officials quarantine counties to slow its spread via ash trees and firewood. It is illegal to take ash trees, parts of ash trees, and all hardwood firewood out of a quarantined county into a non-quarantined county without a compliance agreement from ODA. Violators face fines up to \$4,000. It is also illegal to take these items out of the state of Ohio, per federal quarantine.

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.

Since it was first discovered in Ohio in 2003, EAB has been identified in 35 counties: Allen, Auglaize, Butler, Cuyahoga, Delaware, Defiance, Erie, Fairfield, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Huron, Logan, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Medina, Mercer, Miami, Montgomery, Ottawa, Paulding, Portage, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Union, Warren, Williams, Wood and Wyandot counties. These counties have been quarantined to stop the movement of firewood and ash logs, which are the largest contributors to the spread of EAB. For the latest quarantine map, go to the following Web site:

www.ohioagriculture.gov/eab/plnt-eab-maps.stm.

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 holes in the bark about one-eighth inch wide.

For more information on the latest quarantine or on firewood movement, call 1-888-OHIO-EAB.

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