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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ohio Agriculture Department Adds Portage County to Emerald Ash Borer Quarantine

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Nov. 13, 2007) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture today expanded the state’s Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) quarantine area to include Portage County. 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.

Department officials discovered an infested ash tree at the eastbound service plaza on the Ohio Turnpike in central Portage County. The tree was one of nearly 10,000 detection trees -- ash trees that are stressed to attract EAB already in the area -- set across the state in efforts to survey for the destructive insect. Surveyors are inspecting detection trees by peeling off the bark to look for EAB larvae. Nearly half of the trees have been inspected.

Department officials quarantine counties, such as Portage County, once EAB is discovered 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. 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 34 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, 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 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.

- 30 -

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