



News for Immediate Release

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Pennsylvania Plum Pox Virus Officially Eradicated; Testing Shows No Recurrence

Harrisburg – Agriculture Secretary George Greig today said the more than decade-long effort to eradicate the Plum Pox Virus has been a success after three years of required monitoring shows the disease has not reappeared.

“The department has been committed to eradicating the disease and minimizing its impact on growers’ livelihoods and the state’s economy,” Greig said. “This latest survey officially closes the books on the 14 years of Plum Pox Virus eradication efforts, which were only possible through the cooperative efforts of fruit growers, researchers, educators and governments.”

Pennsylvania was declared free of the virus in October 2009 after three years of negative testing. The latest survey marks the third of three consecutive years of required monitoring during the recovery phase. Since the disease has not reappeared, the virus is considered officially eradicated.

A survey conducted last summer tested 41,408 leaf samples, primarily from Adams County, but also including samples from Cumberland, Franklin, Lancaster and York counties. State and federal agriculture department crews began collecting orchard samples in May and finished at the end of October.

Formal orchard surveys for the virus will not occur in 2013, though standard testing of nursery material will continue. Additional orchard monitoring may be proposed in future years, as part of ongoing early detection strategies for pests of concern.

Plum Pox Virus severely affects production of fruit-bearing and ornamental varieties of almond, apricot, cherry, nectarine, peach and plum stone fruit trees. After it was found in Adams County peach trees in 1999, state and federal agriculture officials teamed with Penn State University to impose a 300 square-mile quarantine area, perform aggressive surveillance and develop an eradication program.

Since trees cannot be cured of Plum Pox, affected growers were required to destroy all exposed stone fruit trees within the quarantined areas in the four affected counties. In Pennsylvania, 1,675 orchard acres were destroyed.

For more information, visit www.agriculture.state.pa.us and search “Plum Pox Virus.”

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