

Dear Public Officials,

You have likely heard about the latest invasive insect pest that threatens our natural habitats, managed landscapes, and farms and forests — the spotted lanternfly. This is potentially the worst invasive pest since the introduction of the gypsy moth nearly 150 years ago. This Asian planthopper was found for the first time in the United States in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in 2014. It has since spread throughout 13 counties in southeastern Pennsylvania, currently under quarantine, and has recently been found in New Jersey and Virginia.

This insect threatens not only about \$18 billion of agricultural products in Pennsylvania, but it can make outdoor areas unusable by excreting a sticky substance called honeydew, which serves as a host for sooty mold. Furthermore, the presence of spotted lanternfly could threaten the shipment of goods over state lines and from the port of Philadelphia, should restrictions be placed on the movement of Pennsylvania products.

Since it is new to the United States, little is known about its behavior and biology, but researchers in the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are working tirelessly to gather scientific data on how to contain and manage this pest. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) and USDA are leading the strategy and implementation of containment and control efforts, while the college focuses on research, education, and outreach.

Working with PDA and USDA, Penn State Extension has launched a spotted lanternfly website — extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly — that serves as the primary hub for the most up to date information on this insect. To help stop the spread, the public can visit this website to learn how to identify spotted lanternfly and to report any potential sightings for action by PDA. You will also find an online course that provides businesses with the necessary training to receive a [PDA permit](#) that is required for companies operating in the quarantine zone to move equipment and goods within and out of the zone.

We are reaching out to request your help in fighting this pest. Please help us spread the word and engage your constituents in this effort by pasting the above spotted lanternfly image on your web sites and hyperlink it to the SLF website. You can also promote the SLF Hotline at 1-888-4BADFLY (1-888-422-3359), where the public can get information and report a SLF sighting. Also, please follow and share the time sensitive postings on Twitter ([@PAAgriculture](#) and [@agsciences](#)) and Facebook ([@padeptofag](#) and [@agsciences](#)). Together we can work to stop the spread of this pest and develop control methods to minimize its impact.

If you did not receive this communication electronically, please contact Jillian Stevenson (jxh41@psu.edu) at 814-863-2822 to obtain the electronic links or for additional information.

Thank you,



Russell C. Redding
Secretary, PA Department of Agriculture



Rick Roush
Dean, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences