



## **Texas Department of Agriculture**

### ***Baled Hay & Straw Movement under the Imported Fire Ant Quarantine***

SID MILLER, COMMISSIONER

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#### **Purpose**

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) seeks to facilitate the safe movement of agricultural products and commodities, including baled hay and straw, out of areas under quarantine for the Imported Fire Ant (IFA). TDA's goal is to help support commerce, while safe-guarding against the spread of IFA.

#### **Background**

IFA is a serious nuisance to people, animals, plants, and property in many areas of Texas. IFA is aggressive and its sting can be life threatening to people and animals. Because IFA continues to spread and increase in density, recreational and work activities may be affected. In rural communities, IFA interferes with farming practices by injuring livestock and damaging crops and farm machinery. In addition, IFA often causes damage to other types of property including electrical and communications equipment.

To facilitate the enforcement of IFA quarantine regulation, the enclosed map shows the Texas counties quarantined for IFA. A list of quarantined articles that require a certificate or permit for movement from a quarantined area is included on the opposite side of the map. There are no restrictions imposed on the movement of quarantined articles within quarantined areas, unless the articles originate on infested properties and an inspector determines that the articles movement would risk further spread of IFA.

Concerns of Texas hay producers about IFA quarantine restrictions have prompted the development of guidelines for the movement of hay and straw from quarantined areas to non-quarantined areas. At present, there is no chemical treatment to control IFA in hay or straw.

#### **Authority**

Title 4, Texas Administrative Code, §19.100-19.103.

#### **Responsibility**

Texas Department of Agriculture

#### **Quarantined Articles**

Within a quarantine area, baled hay and baled straw stored in direct contact with the ground, and those with soil attached, are quarantined articles and are prohibited movement outside the quarantined area, unless the hay or straw is inspected, found apparently IFA free, and a permit, phytosanitary certificate, or compliance agreement is issued and accompanies the inspected shipment.

Specifically, shipments from IFA quarantined areas are allowed entry into or through IFA free areas under the following conditions.

(1) A phytosanitary certificate or permit must accompany the movement of quarantined articles from any quarantined area into or through any point outside thereof.

(2) Phytosanitary certificates or permits may be issued by an inspector or under the authority of a compliance agreement if the quarantined articles:

(A) have originated in certified IFA free premises in a quarantined area and have not been exposed to infestation while within the quarantined area; or

(B) upon examination, have been found to be free of infestation; or

(C) have been treated to destroy infestation in accordance with approved procedures; or

(D) have been grown, produced, manufactured, stored, or handled in such a manner that no infestation would be transmitted.

(3) Phytosanitary certificates or permits shall be securely attached to the outside of the container in which the articles are moved except where the certificate or permit is attached to the shipping document and the quarantined articles are adequately described on the shipping document or on the certificate or permit.

- Non-quarantined Articles** Within a quarantined area, baled hay or baled straw that meets any of the requirements below is a non-quarantined article, and has no movement restrictions.
- Bales of hay or straw that are stacked, except the bottom layer that is in direct contact with the ground and must be inspected.
  - Hay or straw that is cut, baled, loaded, and shipped without storage.
  - Baled hay or straw that is stored on an impervious surface such as asphalt, concrete, hard pan (highly compressed soil), etc.
  - Baled hay or straw that is stored elevated above the soil on pallets or tires, or stored on landscaping cloth, plastic, or tarp placed over the soil.

**Inspection Request** Contact the TDA office nearest your location to schedule a TDA IFA inspection:

West Texas Regional Office (Region 1) - (806) 799-8555  
North Texas Regional Office (Region 2) - (214) 631-0265  
Gulf Coast Regional Office (Region 3) - (713) 921-8200  
South Central Texas Regional Office (Region 4) - (210) 820-0288  
Valley Regional Office (Region 5) - (956) 787-8866

**Guidelines** The following will serve as general guidelines to aid in slowing the spread of the IFA from quarantined areas into non-quarantined areas:

1. When cutting and baling hay or straw, visible mounds should be avoided by going around or stopping equipment.
2. After baling, hay or straw should be removed from contact with the soil and made free of soil as soon as possible.
3. Hay or straw must be stored in a manner that prohibits contact with the soil, such as:
  - on an impervious surface (e.g. concrete slab);
  - on landscaping cloth, heavy plastic, or tarp, without holes or tears, which should extend at least two feet beyond the edges of the bales;
  - above ground (e.g. pallet).
4. Hay or straw that is stored in contact with the soil is not eligible for shipment outside the quarantined area, unless inspected and found apparently IFA free.
5. Sites where hay or straw are located should be treated with approved bait, following label instructions, 30 days prior to shipment. Any IFA mounds detected around a storage facility or within a shipping area should be treated immediately.
6. Prior to loading hay or straw, equipment must be inspected to insure freedom from IFA. If IFA is detected on the equipment, the infestation must be removed by cleaning the equipment prior to shipment.
7. Before hay or straw leaves a quarantined area, place food (e.g. peanut butter) on a card near the shipment. Wait an hour and check for IFA. If IFA is detected, the shipment may not leave the quarantined area.
8. Road station inspections in Texas will be conducted to check for the presence of IFA. If IFA is found, the shipment could be returned to origin, seized, or destroyed.

**Emergency Movement** In an emergency, at the discretion of the Commissioner or the Designee of the Commissioner, TDA may waive the fee associated with the inspection and issuance of phytosanitary certification, to facilitate the supply of forage and feed for displaced livestock affected by the disaster. Upon the approval of APHIS and at the discretion of the Commissioner, Extension Agents may be utilized to assist in IFA inspections. In no event will movement of quarantined articles be allowed, without compliance with the Imported Fire Ant Quarantine Regulations, including inspection for IFA.