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USDA Grants More Than \$1.7 Million to Protect Hawaiian Crops and Natural Resources

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Press Release

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WASHINGTON, January 14, 2025 - Hawaii is set to receive more than \$1.7 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to combat invasive plant pests and diseases and protect the state's vital agriculture and natural resources. This funding is part of a \$70 million nationwide initiative supporting 357 projects across 49 states, Tribal lands, Guam, and Puerto Rico, authorized under the Plant Protection Act Section 7721.

"Hawaii is home to over 6,600 farms spanning more than a million acres of farmland. As a leading producer of coffee, macadamia nuts, papaya and avocado, the state plays a vital role in our agricultural economy," said USDA Under Secretary Jenny Lester Moffitt. "These projects will help safeguard Hawaii's natural resources and ensure its continued contribution to a robust national agricultural sector."

The funding will support projects covering a range of plant health protection activities, including, but not limited to:

- \$261,884 to develop novel management strategies to protect against two invasive insect pests of macadamia trees;
- \$228,764 to develop tools to quickly and accurately identify the invasive Tau fruit fly;
- \$221,187 to test the use of beneficial bacteria in sterilized Mediterranean fruit flies to improve sterile insect technique methodology;
- \$197,682 to design a strategy to prevent melon flies from becoming resistant to the insecticide spinosad;
- \$185,924 to improve pest management by using advanced genetic techniques to measure insecticide resistance in melon flies;
- \$158,737 to develop a highly attractive lure that mimics food smells to trap female oriental fruit flies;
- \$144,775 to create methods to identify and distinguish the invasive soybean bud borer from closely related species;
- \$120,687 to explore ways to transfer insecticides from male to female fruit flies to improve pest control;

- \$105,000 to develop a series of short courses and workshops that increase diagnostic and identification skills of First Detectors in Hawaii and the Pacific region; and
- \$46,000 to support National Clean Plant Network plant stocks for sweet potatoes.

These efforts are part of a broader mission to ensure U.S. agriculture thrives in the face of new challenges. Since 2009, USDA has invested nearly \$940 million in more than 5,800 projects to detect and respond to invasive plant pests and diseases quickly. This work also ensures specialty crop producers have access to certified, disease-free plants.

For a full list of projects funded in Hawaii and nationwide, visit the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service [website](#) (562.47 KB).