

**Finding of No Significant Impact for
Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program Use of Arkion Fly and Tick Spray
Environmental Assessment
August 2025**

By preventing the establishment of cattle fever ticks (CFTs) in the United States north of the Permanent Quarantine Zone (PQZ), the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program (CFTEP) simultaneously eliminates the disease bovine babesiosis from the United States (U.S.) cattle population. The ongoing increase in infestations combined with a high frequency of infestations occurring outside the PQZ suggests current CFTEP inspection and treatment activities may be insufficient to ensure adequate protection of the U.S. livestock industry in the future. Therefore, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS), Veterinary Services completed an environmental assessment (EA) evaluating the use of Arkion Fly & Tick Spray (AFTS) to prevent or limit the spread of cattle fever ticks (CFTs). AFTS is an all-natural soap-based insecticide composed of natural plant oils for control of flies, ticks, and other insects.

In the EA, USDA APHIS analyzed the potential impacts on the human environment associated with use of AFTS as an additional CFT treatment method by the CFTEP. USDA APHIS CFTEP and Environmental Risk and Analysis Services, Policy and Program Development, and the Texas Animal Health Commission were consulted in the preparation of the EA. The EA, incorporated by reference in this document, is available from:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Veterinary Services
2150 Centre Avenue, Bldg. B
Fort Collins, CO 80526

The EA analyzed the alternatives: (A) No Action – the CFTEP will not use AFTS but will continue its current tick control strategies and (B) the Proposed Alternative – the CFTEP would use AFTS on wildlife (i.e., white-tailed deer and nilgai), cattle, horses, and livestock areas for CFT control in the proposed action area.

Under the No Action Alternative, USDA APHIS would not use AFTS as part of the CFTEP. APHIS would continue to carry out current activities that help prevent the spread of CFTs and potential exposure of cattle to babesiosis. These activities include inspection of livestock at selected South Texas markets handling livestock originating from the PQZ, surveillance and patrolling for stray or smuggled tick-infested livestock, inspection and pesticide treatment of livestock on quarantined premises, feeding ivermectin-treated corn to white-tailed deer, installation of fencing to deter the movement of wildlife tick hosts, and population control of certain hosts such as nilgai.

Under the Proposed Alternative (the preferred action), USDA APHIS would continue the current CFTEP activities described under the No Action Alternative. Additionally, USDA APHIS proposes to treat wildlife, including white-tailed deer and nilgai, cattle, horses, and livestock areas where ticks can be found (e.g., barns, enclosures) with AFTS to control the tick vectors of cattle fever. These treatments would serve as an additional tool for the CFTEP to help prevent CFT infestations in the PQZ along the border of Texas and Mexico and areas in southern Texas where CFT outbreaks may occur. The proposed program area includes Brooks, Cameron, Dimmit, Duval, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kinney, Kleberg, La Salle, Live Oak, Maverick, McMullen, Starr, Val Verde, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata Counties in South Texas. AFTS qualifies as an exempt minimum risk pesticide product under section 25(b) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and, as such, is exempt from regulation under FIFRA. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency considers these products to pose little or no risk to humans and the environment.

The analysis in the EA found that there will not be any reasonably foreseeable significant effects on the quality of the human environment as a result of this proposed action. Potential effects from the use of AFTS on the human environment are not anticipated based on CFTEP's proposed use patterns, the small quantities of the active ingredients in the formulated product, and the lack of toxicity and the environmental fate properties of the ingredients comprising AFTS.

USDA APHIS determined that there are no disproportionate adverse effects associated with the preferred action alternative to children under Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks.

I found that the implementation of the proposed action will not have a reasonably foreseeable significant effect on the quality of the human environment. I have considered and based my finding of no significant impact on the analysis contained within the EA. Because I have not found evidence of significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed action, I find that an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared and that the program may proceed with the action immediately following the posting of this decision document.

Dr. Mark A. Lyons
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Strategy and Policy, Veterinary Services
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

08/08/2025

Date