Aug. 19 Webinar Set To Discuss Stopping Fire Ant Spread

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

Over the last two summers, when drought-stunted pastures forced livestock producers to ship in hay from other areas, concerns were raised about the potential for hitchhiking fire ants to spread to new areas.

Kelly Loftin, extension entomologist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, will discuss tactics for halting the movement of fire ants in a free webinar set for Monday, Aug. 19.

Loftin says that mass movement of hay into drought stricken areas can have unintended consequences. Fire ant colonies in the hay bales can travel long distances with the hay, allowing fire ants to become established in new areas.

To keep the destructive insects from spreading, fire ant quarantine areas exist in Arkansas, Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. (See map at: http://1.usa.gov/18sXb1s)

"A fire ant quarantine exists to slow the spread of fire ants," Loftin said. "Hay producers, trucking companies and hay recipients, especially those who live outside the quarantine area, all need to understand the rules and regulations."

Charles Brown, national policy manager with the United States Department of Agriculture, will discuss current regulations involved with moving hay out of the fire ant quarantine area and hay storage protocols that producers can follow to minimize the chances that fire ants get into the hay.

The webinar will also address what a producer should if he or she receives infested hay.

The webinar is for hay producers, hay recipients, and Cooperative Extension agents who need answers they can use.

"We want to give people sound, research-based solutions," he says. "This webinar allows us to bring in experts from across the nation. Producers will be able to ask specific questions and get answers to they need."

More information can be found at https://learn.extension.org/events/993, including a link to access the webinar on Aug. 19. The webinar is sponsored by eXtension and its Imported Fire Ant eXtension Community of Practice. Δ