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**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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CHAIRPERSON

HAWAII BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Aug. 26, 2015

 **MILILANI MAUKA NEIGHBORHOOD TO BE SURVEYED**

**AGAIN FOR LITTLE FIRE ANT**

**Stop the Ant Campaign Begins**

HONOLULU — The Mililani Mauka neighborhood that was found to be infested with little fire ants in June 2014, will be extensively surveyed again on Friday, Aug. 28th. Crews completed eight planned treatments in the six-acre infestation zone and spot surveys since February 2015 have not detected any LFA.

**EDITORS NOTE: Media who would like to cover the survey activities may meet in Mililani Mauka at the 95-1100 block of Auina St. starting at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 28th. Also at 10:00 a.m. Gov. Ige will sign a proclamation for “Stop the Ant Campaign” in his office.**

Incidentally, state and county leaders are proclaiming September “Spot the Ant, Stop the Ant” month. As part of the month's activities, lectures and contests will be offered to educate the public. Residents of islands that are mostly free of these stinging pests are urged to test their yard for the presence of little fire ants using chopsticks and a small dab of peanut butter. Ant samples can be placed in zip top bags, frozen to kill the ants, and turned in to the Hawaiʻi Department of Agriculture for identification.

LFA was first detected in Mililani Mauka in June 2014 by a resident on Auina St. Subsequent surveys found the invasive ants covered homes on both sides of a greenway (gully).

A multi-agency group has been working since to survey and treat the area, including the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, the Hawaii Ant Lab (HAL), the Oahu Invasive Species Committee and the Hawaii Invasive Species Council.

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“The success of this eradication program really lies in the cooperation of the residents, the community association and the dedication of the ant-eradication crews,” said Scott Enright, Chairperson of the Hawaii Board of Agriculture. “The key is also to find infestations early as possible.”

According to the treatment plan developed by HAL and HDOA entomologists, several alternating types of pesticides and bait formulas are applied on a six-week interval. The last treatment scheduled for Mililani Mauka was in May 2015. The extensive surveys, such as the one conducted on Friday, will continue for several years to ensure that the LFA have been eradicated.

LFA has been found on Hawaii Island since 1999. In late December 2013, LFA was detected on hapuu logs (Hawaiian fern) at retail stores on Maui and Oahu. Five Oahu nurseries, three of which were in Waimanalo, were found to have small infestations of LFA, which were treated and are clear
of the ants. There is a six-acre area in Waimanalo that has also been treated for LFA and is also being monitored.

Originally from South America, LFA is considered among the world’s worst invasive species.

LFA are tiny ants, measuring 1/16th inch long, are pale orange in color and move slowly. LFA move slowly, unlike the Tropical Fire Ant which is established in Hawaii, which move quickly and are much larger with a larger head in proportion to its body. LFA can produce painful stings and large red welts and may cause blindness in pets. They can build up very large colonies on the ground, in trees and other vegetation, and buildings and homes and completely overrun a property.

For more information on LFA in Hawaii, go to the HDOA website: <http://hdoa.hawaii.gov/pi/main/lfainfo/>

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**Attach: Map of Mililani Mauka Infestation Zone**

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