

Red Imported Fire Ant Farmer Self-Inspection Checklist

Don't move fire ants! Before moving hay and equipment out of areas near Red Imported Fire Ant infestations, use this checklist with your vehicles, equipment, and products.

The Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA) is an invasive insect. These ants are extremely aggressive, red to brown in color, and have two segments on the waist and a stinger on the end of the body. RIFAs were found in Hampton, Virginia in 1989 and by 2022 have spread to 25 counties and cities, 18 of which are under quarantine (see map below). RIFA is found in loose, uncompacted soil in hay fields, row crops, roadsides, and pastures. Soil picked up by combines, planters, cultivators, plows, hay bales, and earth moving equipment can harbor and move fire ants. Movement of fire ants and equipment that can harbor fire ants is regulated by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS). This applies to movement from inside the quarantine area to outside. Movement within the quarantine is not regulated.

Self - Inspection Checklist for Farmers

Keep copies of this sheet in vehicles used in fire ant infested locations

Date _____ Farm inspector _____

Before loading hay and other items stored outside, check for soil that may harbor fire ants:

Harvest equipment (e.g. combines, balers, tractors and trailers)

Hay that has not been stored on a pallet or hard surface

Before leaving a farm check for soil and fire ants on:

Earth moving equipment

Trailer landing gear

Planters, cultivators, plows, and combines

Outriggers on equipment

Wheel wells and suspension of vehicles

Check equipment that has been stored outside for a long period of time:

Trailers

Portable buildings

Electrical junction boxes

Fuel tanks

If you find fire ants:

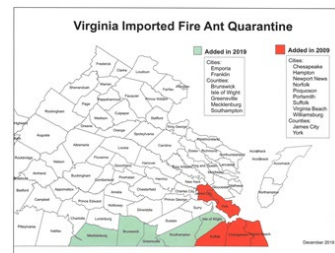
Sweep them off with a broom.

Power wash the soil and ants off equipment.

Apply bait treatment if control is needed.

Contact your local Virginia Cooperative Extension Office for information.

Report them to VDACS if outside of the quarantine area.



Figures from top: VDACS quarantine map, <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/fire-ant-quar-map.pdf>; RIFA adult, Pest and Diseases Image Library, Bugwood.org; fire ant mound (2 photos) by Eric Day.