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CBP Assumes Operational Control of Tethered Aerostat Radar Systems (TARS)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) recently assumed responsibility for the Tethered Aerostat Radar System (TARS) from the U.S. Air Force (USAF). The aerostat-borne surveillance system has been used in the United States since 1978 and provides radar detection and monitoring of low-altitude aircraft and surface vessels along the U.S.-Mexico border, the Florida Straits, and a portion of the Caribbean.

USAF and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) personnel began the formal transfer of the TARS program, contracts, and operations responsibilities in March 2013. On July 1, 2013, CBP assumed official program and contract management responsibilities and have assumed all funding requirements in FY 2014.

The program consists of eight TARS aerostat sites with six along the Southwest Border — Yuma and Ft Huachuca, AZ; Deming, NM; Marfa, Eagle Pass, and Rio Grande City, TX — and two additional sites in the Florida Keys and Puerto Rico.

For additional information, please contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

CBP Agriculture Specialists Intercept Asian Citrus Psyllids



U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agriculture specialists at the Hidalgo/Pharr/Anzalduas Port of Entry recently intercepted Asian Citrus Psyllids, known carriers of citrus greening disease, in three separate enforcement actions.

“Our vigilant CBP agriculture specialists at the Hidalgo/Pharr/Anzalduas Port of Entry helped safeguard American agriculture and our local citrus industry by intercepting three Asian Citrus Psyllids, which are known vectors or carriers of citrus greening disease, also known as Huanglongbing,” said Efrain Solis, CBP Port Director, Hidalgo. “Citrus greening disease, if allowed to establish itself, can have a catastrophic effect on citrus trees and the local citrus industry, which also would generate a significant economic impact as well.”

The most recent interception occurred on Friday, November 1, 2013, after a CBP officer had referred a vehicle driven by a 48-year-old male driver from Mission, TX, for a secondary agricultural inspection. During that examination, CBP agriculture specialists examined a bag of key limes and observed a live insect amid the limes. Upon closer examination, isolation and verification of the insect through U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) entomologists in Los Indios, the insect was positively identified as *Diaphorina citri* Kuwayama or Asian Citrus Psyllid.

Two other interceptions of Asian Citrus Psyllids occurred in the commercial environment on October 9 and 10 during CBP agriculture specialist examinations of commercial lime shipments at the Pharr Import Lot. In each case, the insect was observed amid the commercial shipments of limes. A USDA entomologist positively identified both insects as Asian Citrus Psyllids. The lime shipments were refused entry and returned to Mexico.

Citrus greening is a disease caused by a bacterium that can infect most citrus varieties and some ornamental plants (such as orange jasmine) and was first detected in the U.S. in 2005 in Miami-Dade County, FL. According to the USDA, the disease has seriously affected citrus production in India, Asia, Southeast Asia, the Arabian Peninsula and Africa.

For additional information, please visit the [CBP Website](http://www.cbp.gov) or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

The Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) serves as the single point of contact within CBP for communications between CBP and Congress.

OCA is committed to addressing any question or concern you may have related to CBP's complex mission. Please contact us:

Phone: (202) 344-1760; Fax: (202) 344-2152; E-mail: OCAInquiry@cbp.dhs.gov.

Please visit CBP's [Congressional Resources](http://www.cbp.gov) webpage for Frequently Asked Questions, News and Events, and other CBP Resources.

Texas Hold 'Em Initiative Sees Continued Success



A truck driver's CDL was revoked after he was convicted of smuggling more than 740 pounds of marijuana.

The "Texas Hold 'Em" initiative, a collaborative effort between the U.S. Border Patrol's Rio Grande Valley Sector and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), aims to reduce the trafficking of contraband in commercial vehicles, such as tractor-trailers, buses and freight carriers by using existing state laws to revoke the commercial driver's license (CDL) of a person convicted of a smuggling-related offense. According to the Texas Transportation code, a person who holds a CDL is disqualified from driving a commercial vehicle for life if convicted of using any motor vehicle during the commission of a felony.

When the driver of a commercial vehicle is arrested on smuggling charges, the Border Patrol's Combined Enforcement Unit tracks the case until the driver is convicted or found not guilty. If convicted, the driver's information is submitted to DPS for cancellation of the individual's CDL. Additionally, the Combined Enforcement Unit reaches out to commercial drivers and transportation companies to educate them on the consequences of smuggling.

In addition to losing their CDLs, three commercial drivers were convicted in October and received prison sentences — two for smuggling marijuana and one for human trafficking. One of the marijuana smugglers was caught with more than 740 pounds; the other one was caught with nearly 2,500 pounds. The driver convicted of human smuggling was caught with 15 undocumented immigrants, a crime that earned him 64 months in prison. During Fiscal Year 2013, nearly 70 cases were submitted for the cancellation of CDLs.

The Rio Grande Valley Sector is part of the South Texas Campaign, which leverages federal, state and local resources to combat transnational criminal organizations.

For additional information, please visit the [CBP Website](#) or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

Travel Smart this Holiday Season

- Join the ranks of the [Trusted Travelers](#) through Global Entry, SENTRI, or NEXUS. Sign up now!
- Documents, Documents, Documents! Know the required travel documentation for your trip. Visit www.travel.state.gov for specific information.
- From a Visa Waiver Country? Don't leave home without your ESTA! More on getting your [Electronic System for Travel Authorization](#) before boarding your flight.
- For those traveling by air or sea on a visa, CBP has automated the Form I-94—Travelers can find their I-94 number at www.cbp.gov/I94.
- I do declare! Complete your Customs Declaration (your flight staff will hand out the form) before you deplane. What is eligible for [duty exemptions](#)?
- Restricted or Prohibited? Know what merchandise you can bring to the U.S.: [Restricted/Prohibited](#) products.
- Don't pack a pest! Many agriculture products can bring damaging pests and diseases into the country, check to see what may be harmful: [Bringing Agricultural Products Into the United States](#)
- Monitor border [wait times](#). Know what ports of entry have lighter traffic or use an alternate to spend less time getting to and from your vacation!



Rescheduled: East Coast Trade Symposium

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is proud to announce that the East Coast Trade Symposium is scheduled for March 6 - 7, 2014, in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Further information regarding symposium details and online registration will be available soon. Please continue to check the [CBP Website](#) for updated information. We look forward to seeing you at the CBP 2014 East Coast Trade Symposium.

CBP Enforcement News



CBP Seizes Marijuana Concealed in Truck

El Paso, TX – On November 5, 2013, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers working at the El Paso Port of Entry seized 222 pounds of marijuana. A CBP officer at the primary inspection station had selected a vehicle for a secondary exam after noting that the driver appeared nervous. CBP officers scanned the vehicle with the Z-Portal x-ray system and saw anomalies in the appearance of the vehicle. CBP drug-sniffing dog "Drago" also searched the truck and alerted to the panels. CBP drilled into the suspect area and recovered a substance which tested positive for marijuana. CBP officers continued their exam and located 127 marijuana-filled bundles in the walls of the truck. The estimated street value of the seized marijuana is \$177,600.

– Visit the [CBP Newsroom](#) for the full story.



CBP Officers Seize Nearly \$6.1 Million in Cocaine at Cargo Facility

Brownsville, TX – On November 1, 2013, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers at the Veterans' International Bridge encountered a tractor and utility flatbed trailer at the cargo facility. The tractor and trailer were referred to CBP secondary for further inspection. Examination by CBP officers in cargo secondary revealed 85 packages hidden within the structure of the flatbed trailer. CBP officers removed the packages from within the trailer which had a total combined weight of 87.0 kilograms (191.8 pounds) of alleged cocaine. The alleged cocaine from this seizure has an estimated street value of approximately \$6,137,600. CBP officers seized the narcotics and the tractor-trailer.

– Visit the [CBP Newsroom](#) for the full story.

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