**RANGELAND GRASSHOPPERS:** The group of native organisms that APHIS deals with is rangeland grasshoppers and Mormon crickets (GH/MCs) that can occasionally reach damaging levels.  APHIS personnel conduct adult GH/MC surveys on rangeland throughout Montana. The data collected from these surveys is used to forecast areas of rangeland that may have damaging populations of GH/MCs the following growing season. To keep you informed of those survey results, enclosed is a copy of the map for your area showing the densities observed during the 2020 adult grasshopper survey period. This is a snapshot in time and not necessarily a full picture but is the best predictor we have of what may be ahead for 2021. The electronic version of the maps can be printed and duplicated as you see fit. A copy of the “Regional” 2021 Rangeland Grasshopper Hazard map is also included as supplemental information.

As you can see by the attached maps, and likely experienced in 2020, rangeland grasshopper populations have increased considerably.   Each grasshopper has the potential to lay hundreds of eggs, so we continue to recommend that landowners/managers pay close vigilance to hatching grasshoppers, starting in late May/early June of 2021 and continue to regularly monitor hatch and development on a weekly or more frequent basis.

The number of requests for APHIS assistance with grasshopper suppression throughout Montana, Wyoming, and several other States was higher in 2020 than any year since the 2010. Supplemental funding was received by APHIS just prior to the 2020 and again mid-season season.  Most of this funding does not carry over to the following year.  Therefore, it will be important for APHIS to communicate now with interested parties to determine potential funding needs for the 2021 season. Those groups that can coordinate and communicate early will receive priority if funding is limited in 2021.   Funding for cooperative treatments is provided on first-come first-served basis throughout the twenty-three western states that have traditionally had issues with rangeland grasshoppers.   Montana is a northern state where grasshoppers emerge and develop later than warmer areas.  If APHIS participation is requested by anyone in your area, it will be critical to initiate those conversations earlier, rather than later.