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WVDA COOPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PEST SURVEYS UNDERWAY

Charleston, W.Va. – In an effort to detect specific exotic plant pests, diseases and weeds identified as threats to forests and agriculture land in West Virginia, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) has started conducting early detection trapping and surveys throughout the state. The goal of the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey program (CAPS) is to detect any new, non-native plant pests and to monitor the impact of native agricultural pests.

“Invasive species can be devastating to West Virginia’s forests and farming land. We have seen the type of damage these pests can cause, the gypsy moth is a perfect example,” stressed Commissioner Leonhardt. “By monitoring and taking the proper actions to reduce the presence of the invasive species, we can help protect our lands for generations to come.”

The program functions as a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service on specific pest-control issues. The program aims to support export certification programs and contributes data to the National Agricultural Pest Information System (NAPIS) and Integrated Plant Health Information System (IPHIS) computer databases.

“WVDA staff through CAPS and Farm Bill agreements will be setting over 100 insect monitoring traps in varying trees and crops to screen for any new introductions of harmful plant pests. This year we will be placing traps in cherry, oak and pine trees as well as corn, peppers, tomatoes, potatoes, soybean and small grains,” explained WVDA Agricultural Pest Survey Programs Specialist Susan Parker. Trappings will take place from May to early September.

From 2012 to 2016, the WVDA conducted CAPS orchard commodity trappings which detected 23 positive sites for the Spotted Wing Drosophila (*Drosophila suzukii*). The Spotted Wing Drosophila is similar to fruit flies and can cause serious damage particularly to small fruits. Through early detection, the WVDA was able to offer landowners better management techniques to help control infestations.

“Through this cooperative agreement, we have been able to significantly reduce the damages from these harmful plant pests and diseases through early detection,” said WVDA Plant Industries acting Director Quentin “Butch” Sayers. “We cannot fully stop all these invasive species and agriculture pests, but we can limit the impact they have on our forests and farming lands.”

For more information on these surveys please contact Susan Parker at 304-788-1066 or sparker@wvda.us.

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