

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture
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NEWS RELEASE
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WVDA PROPOSES GYPSY MOTH TREATMENTS FOR SPRING 2017

Charleston, W.Va. – The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is proposing aerial treatment of approximately 2,921 acres in Grant, Hardy, Pendleton, Pocahontas and Summers counties to reduce gypsy moth impacts to forested lands. The WVDA proposes to treat these acres under the WVDA Cooperative State-County-Landowner (CSCL) Suppression Program.

“The gypsy moth is a non-native, invasive insect that feeds on over 300 species of trees and shrubs, including West Virginia hardwoods. Defoliation by gypsy moth caterpillars can kill trees, or weaken them substantially, making them more susceptible to other pests and diseases,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt.

“This treatment program helps to safeguard our forest resource including homeowner’s trees, as well as our timber and tourism industries, which are vital components of our state’s economy,” according to Quentin “Butch” Sayers, Acting Director for Plant Industries Division.

The young gypsy moth caterpillars are spread by the wind, which blows the silken threads they exude, creating a parachute effect. Movement by this mechanism tends to be slow.

However, humans have sped the process considerably by unwittingly transporting gypsy moth egg masses, caterpillars or other insect pests on firewood, RVs, campers and other vehicles. WVDA recommends that firewood be purchased locally and that RVs should be thoroughly washed, including the undersides, before moving them.

Landowners within the CSCL Program area of West Virginia contacted the WVDA to have their properties surveyed to determine if they contained 500 egg masses per acre or higher. Areas with 500 egg masses per acre or higher were designated for possible treatment on properties considered wooded residential or wooded recreational.

The landowners in the CSCL Program sign a contract with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture and pay a deposit confirming that they are requesting treatment for their gypsy moth problem. The landowners select the spray material to be used on their property and verify the property boundaries of the area they requested for treatment. The spray materials offered for 2017 were Btk or Mimic.

Maps with specific locations of the proposed treatment areas are available for review at the New Creek or Charleston offices of the WVDA Plant Industries Division. These areas would be treated sometime during early to mid-May 2017 depending on weather conditions and the stage of development of the gypsy moth.

For additional information concerning the WVDA Gypsy Moth Program, contact Quentin “Butch” Sayers, Acting Director, or G. Scott Hoffman, GMCS Coordinator, at 304-788-1066 or via e-mail to ghoffman@wvda.us.

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