

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture
KENT A. LEONHARDT



304-558-3550

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NEWS RELEASE
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Contact: Crescent Gallagher
Communications Director
304/558-3708; 304/380-3922 (cell)
cgallagher@wvda.us

WVDA PROPOSES GYPSY MOTH TREATMENTS FOR SPRING 2018

Charleston, W.Va. – The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA), in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture-Forest Service (USDA-FS), is proposing aerial treatment of approximately 5,298 acres in 2018 for the treatment of gypsy moth. The WVDA will treat these acres under the WVDA Cooperative State-County-Landowner (CSCL) Suppression Program.

“Protecting our forests is an essential duty of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture. We must safeguard one of our state’s most valuable resources,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “Programs like these are vital to our state’s economy.”

WVDA officials are concerned that, without treatment, the gypsy moth infestations in West Virginia will reach high enough levels to cause tree mortality. Large numbers of caterpillars are expected in the 2018 treatment area. It is likely that many already stressed trees will not be able to withstand an additional heavy defoliation and will perish. Water quality, recreation experiences, wildlife habitat and timber production could all be negatively affected.

“Invasive species are the top threat to our forested areas. They feast upon these trees often leading to mortality,” Leonhardt said. “Without treatment, it could negatively affect our timber and tourism industries.”

The young gypsy moth caterpillars are spread through the wind. Human activities have sped the movement of these insects considerably. WVDA officials caution against the transport of firewood into or out of the West Virginia because pests such as the gypsy moth, hemlock woolly adelgid, emerald ash borer and other invasive insects may be in or on the wood. Owners of RVs and campers are asked to thoroughly inspect and wash their equipment before moving it.

The WVDA is soliciting public comment on the areas proposed for treatment. Any comments or concerns, please contact Quentin “Butch” Sayers (qsayers@wvda.us) or G. Scott Hoffman (ghoffman@wvda.us) P.O. Box 9 New Creek, WV 26743 no later than April 1, 2018.

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