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WVDA to Begin Aerial Spraying for Gypsy Moth

Charleston, WV - The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) will begin aerial treatment for gypsy moth in early May. The spraying will occur across approximately 5,298 acres within Grant, Hardy, Nicholas and Pendleton counties. The goal is to reduce impacts of the gypsy moth in West Virginia's forested lands. The WVDA proposed to treat these acres under the WVDA Cooperative State-County-Landowner (CSCL) suppression program.

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

Landowners in the CSCL Program have signed a contract, paid a deposit and share the final cost with the WVDA to complete treatment for their gypsy moth problem. Landowners then select the spray material to be used on their property. The spray materials offered for 2018 are Foray 48B (Btk) or Mimic (Tebufenozide). Egg mass densities on non-residential forested lands must contain 500 egg masses per acre or higher to qualify for treatment.

"This treatment program is a safeguard to one of our most important natural resources. Homeowners, as well as our timber and tourism industries, benefit from this program," Leonhardt said. "Without control measures, our water quality, recreation experiences, wildlife habitat and timber production could all be negatively impacted."

WVDA officials caution against the transport of firewood into or out of the state. Owners of RVs and campers are asked to thoroughly inspect and wash their equipment before moving it.

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If there are any concerns, please contact Quentin “Butch” Sayers, Assistant Director or G. Scott Hoffman, GMCS Coordinator at 304-788-1066 or via e-mail to ghoffman@wvda.us.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.

