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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gypsy Moth Treatment Scheduled in Erie County

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (March 4, 2008) - The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) plans to target an area in Erie County for gypsy moth suppression treatments designed to slow the spread of the destructive insect. The aerial treatments, which will cover 47 acres east of Berlin Heights, were requested by the landowner to help address this devastating pest.

In mid-May, department officials plan to treat the area with two aerial applications of foray (BTK), an insecticide that attacks the digestive tracts of gypsy moth larvae. This treatment, which has been used for decades to suppress gypsy moth populations, specifically targets the insect and is not toxic to humans, pets, birds, or fish.

Gypsy moth, which is an invasive insect that attacks trees and shrubs, has been found in 47 Ohio counties and has been advancing from Pennsylvania and Michigan over the last several years. In its caterpillar stage, it feeds on the leaves of trees and shrubs and is especially fond of oak. A healthy tree can usually withstand only two years of defoliation before it is permanently damaged or dies.

To combat this problem, the department uses several treatment strategies to slow the spread of gypsy moth in Ohio. Officials have three programs aimed to manage the pest, including:

- The “Suppression” program occurs in counties, such as Erie County, where the pest is already generally established. In these counties, landowners voluntarily request treatment to help suppress populations.
- A “Slow-the-Spread” program in counties in front of the larger, advancing gypsy moth population. In these counties, officials work to detect and control isolated populations in an effort to slow the overall advancing gypsy moth infestation.
- An “Eradication” program in areas not generally infested where an isolated population occurs because citizens have carried the pest to the area through infested firewood or outdoor equipment. Officials work through aggressive eradication efforts to eliminate gypsy moth from these areas.

Citizens who would like more information about the Erie County treatment can find treatment maps and details online at www.ohioagriculture.gov/gypsymoth. Citizens wanting to provide official comment about the proposed treatment block should send correspondence to the department by March 15. Letters can be sent via e-mail to gypsymoth@agri.ohio.gov or by hard copy to the Gypsy Moth Program, Ohio Department of Agriculture, 8995 E. Main St., Reynoldsburg, Ohio, 43068.

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