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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gypsy Moth Treatments to Begin in Central Ohio

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (April 30, 2009) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture announced today that aerial treatments designed to slow the spread and suppress the gypsy moth are scheduled to begin in Knox, Franklin, Pickaway, Madison, Hocking, Delaware, and Ross counties.

Treatment blocks include 51 acres in Knox County, 62 acres in Franklin County, 91 acres in Pickaway County, 19 acres in Madison County, 50 acres in Hocking County, 64 acres in Delaware County, and 128 acres in Ross County.

Treatments are administered using a low-flying aircraft that flies just above tree tops. They will begin during the first two weeks of May, which coincides with the insect's first and second caterpillar stages. Ohioans are most likely to notice these treatments occur during early morning hours when weather conditions are ideal. In order for successful application, the following elements are crucial: high humidity, low temperature, and low wind.

In Hocking and Ross Counties, the department will use Dimilin, which is an insecticide that attacks gypsy moth larvae. In the remaining counties, the department will use Foray (Btk), which is a naturally occurring bacterium found in the soil that interferes with the caterpillars' feeding cycles. These treatments are not toxic to humans, pets, birds, or fish.

Citizens can locate maps of treatment blocks by visiting www.agri.ohio.gov and clicking on "Gypsy Moth Program" located under the "Featured Programs" section. Ohioans can receive daily updates regarding treatment progression throughout the state by calling (614) 387-0907 any time after 5 p.m.

Gypsy moths are invasive insects that attack trees and shrubs by defoliation. In its caterpillar stage, the moth 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. In Ohio, 49 counties are currently under gypsy moth quarantine regulations.

The department uses three programs targeted to manage the gypsy moth's presence in Ohio. The "suppression" program is used in counties where the pest is already established (infested zone), but landowners voluntarily request treatment to help suppress populations. The second program, "slow-the-spread," occurs in counties in front of the larger, advancing gypsy moth population (transition zone). And the third program, "eradication", is used in counties where isolated populations develop ahead of the transition zone due to human movement of the gypsy moth (uninfested zone). Officials work to detect and control isolated populations in an effort to slow the overall advancing gypsy moth infestation.

In total, 21 Ohio counties will receive treatment. For more information about gypsy moth, its quarantine, or specific treatment locations, visit www.agri.ohio.gov.

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