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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Offers Gypsy Moth Open Houses in Southern Ohio

Ohio Department of Agriculture Experts to Discuss Aerial Treatments Planned for Spring

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Jan. 26, 2011) – Areas across southern Ohio are slated to receive gypsy moth aerial treatments by the Ohio Department of Agriculture in early spring to slow the spread of the destructive insect. Department staff members will host several open houses in treatment areas that will offer attendees the opportunity to speak directly with those who work with the program, learn about the pest and view maps of treatment areas.

Citizens can also visit www.agri.ohio.gov to view a map of the treatment areas. Those with questions who live near a treatment area in the Southern Ohio region will have the opportunity to talk with experts at the following open houses:

Pike and Ross counties – Feb. 7, 6 – 8 p.m., Pike County Airport, 2577 Alma Omega Road, Waverly, Ohio

Ross, Hocking and Vinton counties – Feb. 7, 6 – 8 p.m., Springfield Twp. Hall, 95 Musselman Road, Chillicothe, Ohio

Jackson, Gallia and Vinton counties – Feb. 8, 6 – 8 p.m., Wellston Town Hall, Council Chambers, 203 E. Broadway, Wellston, Ohio

In Ohio, 51 counties are currently under gypsy moth quarantine regulations. 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.

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

- The “Suppression” program, which occurs in counties where the pest is already established but landowners voluntarily request treatment to help suppress populations.
- The “Slow-the-Spread” program, which occurs 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.
- The “Eradication” program, which occurs in areas not infested where an isolated population occurs because citizens have carried the pest to the area through infested firewood or outdoor equipment. Department officials work through aggressive eradication efforts to eliminate gypsy moth from these areas.

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Treatments used for gypsy moth control include:

- Foray (Btk), a microbial compound naturally found in some agricultural and forest insects
- Mating disruption product, flakes or liquid that disrupt the male moth's ability to locate females for mating
- Dimilin, an insecticide that attacks gypsy moth larvae
- Gypchek, a bio-insecticide specifically used for control of gypsy moth

The department uses different types of treatments, depending on the location and extent of infestation. All treatments require an aerial application. Foray, Dimilin and Gypchek treatments will take place in early to mid-May, and mating disruption treatments will begin in mid-June. The treatments are not toxic to humans, pets, birds or fish.

Citizens who cannot attend the open houses and would like to provide official comment about the proposed treatment blocks should send correspondence to the department by March 1. Letters can be sent by e-mail to gypsymoth@agri.ohio.gov or by hard copy to the attention of the Gypsy Moth Program, Ohio Department of Agriculture, 8995 E. Main St., Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068.

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***Note to Editor:** These gypsy moth open houses are part of 10 open houses scheduled throughout Ohio. For a complete list, call or visit www.agri.ohio.gov.*

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