

## **Continued Agency Support for the Gypsy Moth Program**

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### **Background and Status**

The gypsy moth is a critical plant pest for NPB-member states geographically located in the Southern, Central and Western regions of the country. The gypsy moth was originally detected in the Northeast in 1869. With cooperative programs administered through state and federal agencies, the spread of this pest has been limited to this point. However, with a lessened priority and a declining funding base, it is expected that gypsy moth populations have the potential to dramatically increase and to affect new areas of the country.

The gypsy moth affects more than 300 species of trees and shrubs. Since 1970, more than 78 million acres have been defoliated by the gypsy moth, including over 1.3 million acres in each of the last three years. Routinely, gypsy moth defoliation causes tree mortality, reduces property values, adversely affects commerce, and creates health problems for sensitive individuals who may come in contact with the caterpillars.

The invasion of the gypsy moth frequently occurs in three stages including arrival, establishment, and spread of the pest. Once fully established, preventing local spread of the pest is often difficult and leads to

additional short-distance dispersal, along with long-range spread. As populations persist, these isolated populations coalesce and the general spread of the pest is dramatically accelerated.

It should be noted that approximately 70% of our most susceptible U.S. forests have never been infested by the gypsy moth and as such remain at great risk for introduction and establishment. Fortunately, the operational and management options for this pest are well-established, offering the opportunity to not

only detect the pest early, but also the ability to fully respond, even in the most environmentally-sensitive areas. These options provide response agencies with greater latitude in regards to addressing this pest at an early stage and thus capturing tremendous financial benefits for affected producers and industries.

### **National Plant Board-Policy Directives**

The NPB supports a sustained gypsy moth program that focuses on Slow The Spread at the leading edge, Early Detection Rapid Response in uninfested areas of the country, and regulatory compliance. NPB further supports a commitment to formulating short and long-term strategic plans that provide continued staffing and financial resources.