

FOR INFORMATION/ACTION
DA#2007-19
May 31, 2007

SUBJECT: Asian Gypsy Moth (AGM), *Lymantria dispar*, Vessel Certification Requirements for Japan

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

Effective June 1, 2007, commercial vessels that visit any of the six designated high-risk ports in Japan during high-risk periods (July through September) must be certified as free from AGM if they intend to visit U.S. and Canadian ports. The six Japanese ports are Ooita, Hiroshima, Hannan, Sakata, Hachinhe, and Hakodate. Vessels that have not arranged for this certification risk facing delays for entry to U.S. ports.

Vessel inspection entities in Japan have been selected and have completed training on U.S. and Canadian certification requirements. Shipping interests must contact these Japanese inspection entities directly in order to facilitate the certification scheduling. This is consistent with the program in Far East Russia, except that the system in Japan will be operated by selected private companies, not government entities.

The AGM is native to Asia and vessel superstructures and cargo containers are pathways for potential introduction of AGM. Detections on ships and containers from Asian ports have increased in the past 3 to 4 years from an historical average of one detection every 2 years to two or three each year. Shipping interests have been strongly advised to remove all egg masses that are detected on vessels, cargo, and containers.

Evidence has demonstrated that female AGM's oviposit egg masses on vessel superstructures and on the containers at their ports of origin. Vessels that arrive at U.S. ports with egg masses or hatching larvae are a high-risk pathway for introducing AGM. This problem is being addressed by a number of initiatives that target the vessels at origin and at arrival. Currently, Customs and Border Protection inspects the superstructure of arriving ships for egg masses. However, due to the large volume of maritime vessels that arrive at U.S. ports and the risks posed by AGM, it was necessary to develop procedures to inspect ships at origin in Japan.

Japan and the United States will continue to collaborate on population monitoring of AGM levels at Japanese seaports.

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