



Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Plant Protection and
Quarantine

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March 9, 2020

Ms. Julie C. Van Meter
President, National Plant Board
c/o Bureau of Plant Industry
Nebraska Department of Agriculture
PO Box 94756
Lincoln, NE 68509-4756

Dear Ms. Van Meter,

Thank you for your letter of August 29, 2019, regarding the movement of spotted lanternfly (SLF), gypsy moth (GM) and Japanese beetle (JB) via the containerized household move and air cargo pathways. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) shares the concerns you expressed and would like to inform you of the steps we have planned to address them.

Regarding the air cargo pathway and the associated increase in JB detections, PPQ will develop a pathway risk analysis. This analysis will help inform program improvements and potential changes to the list of airports targeted for JB population level monitoring. When JB populations exceed set thresholds at any of the airports on the list, they will trigger the application of measures to prevent the movement of the pest. In addition, PPQ is evaluating various biocontrol options to ensure we are using the best methods to control JB.

PPQ has made significant progress in addressing the recently identified containerized move segment (e.g. PODS and PackRat) of the moving industry. Interceptions of GM associated with these containers fell from one or more a week in 2015 to only several per year in 2018 and 2019. Although our efforts to reduce the spread of pests via the household move pathway have focused primarily on GM, the GM quarantine encompasses all SLF-infested areas. This affords a level of safeguarding against the human-assisted movement of SLF and other pests via this pathway. We will continue to work with the SLF-affected States to enhance efforts to prevent the movement of SLF to new areas.

During fiscal year 2020, the GM Program will review current spending patterns and activities. One objective of this review is to identify opportunities and additional funding needed to enhance our regulatory efforts for GM, such as augmenting weigh station operations and adding staff hours for increasing compliance and enforcement efforts within the quarantine area, among other things.

Thank you for sharing the NPB's thoughts and concerns about the GM, JB, and SLF programs. We look forward to working together to address these issues.

Sincerely,

Osama El-Lissy
Deputy Administrator
Plant Protection and Quarantine