

## Federal Agencies Launch Joint Attack on Forest Pests

FOUR USDA AGENCIES are launching a multi-million dollar attack on three forest pests, announced Robert W. Long, assistant Secretary for Conservation, Research and Education.

The targets of these accelerated research programs, which may continue as long as five years, are:

- Douglas fir tussock moth, currently defoliated nearly 800,000 acres in Washington, Oregon and Idaho with potential losses estimated at some \$30 million.

- Southern pine beetle, periodically epidemic in over 60 million acres of commercial pine forests in Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and Louisiana, with a 1973 loss of enough timber for 48,000 homes.

- Gypsy moth, on the increase in the eastern U.S. since 1968, threatening a major hardwood resource by defoliation which in 1973 alone covered 2,800 square miles and continues to spread.

Four USDA agencies — Agricultural Research Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Cooperative State Research Service and Forest Service — are combining their resources in an effort to find new weapons in the drive to control the three pests and reduce their damage.

Techniques under consideration include the following: safer, more effective toxicants which kill the pests; microbials which cause diseases of the harmful insects; behavioral materials such as sex attractants that lure males away from females or materials which inhibit insect feeding; naturally-occurring enemies which prey on the threatening insects or parasitize their eggs; and sterile male techniques, such as the release of sterile moths, which by mating with fertile females the sole time these females will mate, preclude any possibility of progeny.

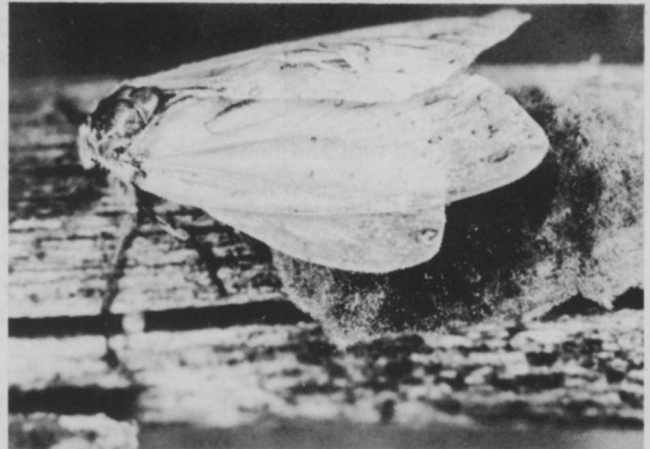
The agencies will also be working to improve the use and application of control materials, and to predict pest populations and damage, thereby enabling pest control specialists to more precisely determine the need for and timing of control actions. Improved aerial and ground application of control materials are under consideration which will increase effectiveness and reduce likelihood of adverse effects to beneficial insects and the environment.

This year, \$9.3 million will be available for the accelerated research and development programs — \$2.0 million for Douglas fir tussock moth in the West; \$2.5 million for southern pine beetle in the South and Southeast; and \$4.8 million for gypsy moth in the East. Activities in these coordinated programs will be carried out in cooperation with State agencies, universities and private industries.

National guidance for the programs will be provided by a program board chaired by Paul A. Vander Myde, deputy assistant secretary for Conservation, Research and Education. Assisting in coordinating the efforts will be Dr. Keith A. Shea, formerly director of Forest Insect and Disease Research for the Forest Service.

A program manager will head the work on each pest.

Thomas McIntyre, who has been chief staff officer for Forest and Soil Pests of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, will be in charge of the Gypsy Moth Program. The Southern Pine Beetle Program will be headed by Dr. Robert C. Thatcher, who was project leader, Southern Forest Experiment Station of the Forest Service. Kenneth H. Wright, formerly assistant director, Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, Forest Service, will be manager for the Douglas Fir Tussock Moth Program. □



The gypsy moth, devastator of hardwood resources in the eastern U.S., will be one target of a multi-million dollar attack launched cooperatively by four USDA agencies.



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