



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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## **No gypsy moth eradication treatments in Washington in 2009**

**OLYMPIA** – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) announced today that no gypsy moth eradication treatment will take place in Washington in 2009. This is the second year in a row no treatment will be conducted. The last treatment occurred in Kent in 2007.

After analyzing the results of last summer's trapping program and follow-up inspections, state agriculture officials concluded that no reproducing gypsy moth populations currently exist here.

“The physical evidence at the sites was not strong enough for proposing an eradication treatment,” said Jim Marra, managing entomologist for WSDA.

WSDA caught 21 moths at 17 sites last summer. Multiple catches occurred at Fort Lewis, Kent, and Point Roberts in Whatcom County. All catches were of the European variety of the gypsy moth.

WSDA inspectors will place approximately 25,000 small cardboard traps in the field next summer looking for new introductions of the pest. Sites where moths were caught in 2008 will be heavily trapped in 2009, Marra noted.

The gypsy moth was first detected in Washington in 1974, but permanent populations have never been established here. The reason the moth has been kept out of Washington, according to state agriculture officials, is the state's aggressive trapping and eradication programs. Washington has conducted 85 moth eradication treatments since 1979.

The 19 states in the U.S. with permanent populations incur millions of dollars of environmental and economic damage annually. Pennsylvania, for example, spent \$7.9 million treating more than 220,000 infested acres this year. The intent of Pennsylvania's treatments was not to eradicate the gypsy moth, but simply to suppress or slow its spread. Marra said it's impossible for states with permanent populations to eradicate infestations because the moth is so well established.

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