Russia and the United States Work to Keep Forest Defoliator Pests Out

In 1993 a cooperative program was initiated by Russia and the United States to develop an early warning system to alert ports in the U.S. and other cooperating countries of increasing forest pest populations in Russia's Far East. This effort, through the International Forestry–Forest Pest Exclusion Program, focuses on reducing the risk of introduction. Other countries cooperating in this effort are New Zealand, Canada, Australia and Chile.

A variety of monitoring techniques were used to track populations of various forest pests in Russia's Far East to reduce the risk of exotic forest pest introductions into the United States.

Pest Exclusion in the Future

- A strategy will be developed for ship containers, which are difficult to track because they move rapidly and frequently from country to country.
- Provide technical and material support for suppression programs conducted in and adjacent to port areas to reduce ship infestations.
- Develop cost effective and efficient survey protocols for all monitored forest defoliators in Russia's Far East.
- Discuss and develop opportunities with other partner countries to explore monitoring and risk assessment programs for other non-indigenous insects that pose a risk if introduced.
- Flight period data and egg mass sampling techniques will be developed for the Rosy Gypsy Moth – one of Russia's serious forest defoliators.

Agency Cooperators: USDA Forest Service-Forest Health Protection ($165,000), USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service ($25,000, will assume $165,000 after FY 2000), Federal Forest Service of Russia, and the State Plant Quarantine Inspection Service of the Russian Federation.

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Benefits of International Forest Health Actions

- Able to determine when ships are at risk of infestation and provide a mechanism for reducing this risk (i.e. notifying other countries of ships in port during high risk period; increasing Russian ship inspections).
- Developed monitoring protocols for three serious forest defoliators in Russia and determined infestation levels and regulatory risk associated with ships and cargo in ports.
- Created open lines of technology and information transfer regarding pest risk assessment, monitoring and control.
- Use survey information to trigger mitigation measures when unacceptable levels of risk are reached (i.e. employ ship exclusion guidelines, decrease ship and port lighting attractive to egg laying female moths, suppression programs).
- Construct a database to determine when control measures are required to suppress populations in and adjacent to ports.

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