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Cabinet

CAB Min (03) 30/10

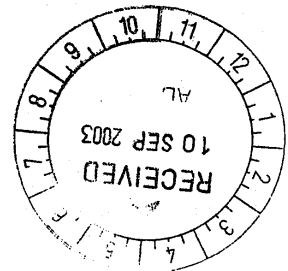
Minute of Decision

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Minister for Biosecurity

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- Minister of Maori Affairs
- Minister for the Environment
- Minister of Conservation
- Associate Minister for Agriculture
- Controller and Auditor-General
- Secretary, EDC



Government Response to Recent Moth Incursions: Asian Gypsy Moth

On 8 September 2003, following reference from the Cabinet Economic Development Committee (EDC), Cabinet:

Probabilities of detection, natural extinction and further incursions

- 1 noted that a single Asian gypsy moth (AGM), considered internationally to be one of the most serious of all forest insect pests, has been trapped in Hamilton and it is possible that a self-sustaining population exists in this area;
- 2 noted that the AGM Technical Advisory Group (TAG) considers there to be a medium-to-high probability that a self-sustaining population of AGM exists in Hamilton;
- 3 noted that there is compelling evidence that this type of moth can establish in New Zealand from a single or small number of egg masses;

- 4 noted that the probability that intensive surveillance would have detected such a population is considered to be low;
- 5 noted that the TAG is of unanimous opinion that the probability of natural extinction of such a population is low;
- 6 noted that the probability of a further incursion of AGM is considered to be low;

Economic impact assessment

- 7 noted that the AGM is included in the World Conservation Union's list of 100 of the world's worst invasive alien species;
- 8 noted that the potential economic impacts of AGM in New Zealand over the period 2003-2053 in the absence of government intervention are estimated to range from \$5 million under a "low impact" scenario to \$398 million under a "high impact" scenario;
- 9 noted that this range reflects uncertainty as to how AGM would respond in New Zealand environments in terms of magnitudes of impacts and rate of spread;
- 10 noted that this is a preliminary assessment, informed by consultation with a wide range of technical and sector experts and subject to peer review, but yet to be reviewed by the TAG;
- 11 noted that the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry believes that, based on the biology of the AGM, availability of preferred host material, absence of natural parasites and favourable climate of New Zealand, the potential impacts of AGM are likely to lie towards the upper end of the range modelled;

Response to gypsy moth incursion

- 12 noted that the response options available to the Government in responding to this incursion are:
 - 12.1 no control;
 - 12.2 monitoring;
 - 12.3 pursue eradication;
- 13 noted that the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) recommends the pursuit of eradication as the Government's preferred response, based on aerial spraying of *Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki* (Btk), in October and November 2003 whilst the moth is in its susceptible larval stage, followed by mass trapping;
- 14 directed MAF to pursue eradication, based on aerial spraying in spring 2003 and mass trapping;
- 15 noted that this response would be conducted by MAF under exercise of Part VI powers of the Biosecurity Act 1993, and MAF proposes to seek use of section 7A to exempt eradication measures from the provisions of Part III of the Resource Management Act 1991 (concerning the discharge of sprays – "contaminants" – and noise);

- 16 **noted** that environmental impact assessments and health risk assessments were undertaken for aerial spraying of Btk for white-spotted tussock moth and painted apple moth and are in development for spraying for AGM;
- 17 **noted** that aerial spraying would need to commence in early October 2003 and be completed by the end of November 2003 while the AGM is in the larval life stage targeted by the spray;
- 18 **noted** that the most urgent component of implementing the proposed eradication programme is communication with the local community and affected sectors in preparation for aerial spraying, including establishing health support services;
- 19 **noted** that s114A of the Biosecurity Act 1993 requires that at least two weeks' public notice be given of aerial spraying and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry estimates that communications activities would require a minimum of four weeks prior to commencement of spraying;
- 20 **noted** that for spraying to commence on 6 October 2003, communications activities would need to commence no later than 8 September 2003;

Financial implications

- 21 **approved** the following changes to appropriations to put into effect the decision in paragraph 14 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance:

Vote: Biosecurity	\$m – Increase/(Decrease)						
	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Outyears	GST
Departmental Output Class: Control of and Response to Pests and Diseases (funded by revenue Crown)	11.143	0.850	0.384	–	–	–	Incl.

- 22 **agreed** that the increase in appropriations referred to in paragraph 21 above be included in the 2003/04 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, these expenses be met from Imprest Supply;
- 23 **noted** that the amounts in paragraph 21 above include contingency for responding to a new find of AGM, detected in time for inclusion in aerial spraying in spring 2003;
- 24 **noted** that there is a low probability of detection of a new find in time for inclusion in aerial spraying in spring 2003 and that the costs of the eradication programme under the single find to date would be \$7.491 million in 2003/04, \$0.303 million in 2004/05 and \$0.086 million in 2005/06 (GST inclusive);
- 25 **agreed** that MAF be authorised to spend up to the amounts referred to in paragraph 24 above (costs under the single find to date) and that additional expenditure up to the amounts in paragraph 21 above (costs under a new find) require the approval of the Minister for Biosecurity and Minister of Finance;

Other matters

- 26 noted that the Minister for Biosecurity indicates that consultation is not required with the government caucuses or other parties represented in Parliament.

Diane Marcom

for Secretary of the Cabinet

Reference: CAB (03) 426; EDC Min (03) 21/2-3