

New tack in gypsy moth fight

SACRAMENTO (UPI) — In an effort to eradicate the tree-destroying gypsy moth, the state plans to quarantine movement of firewood, motor homes and recreational vehicles from a 175-acre region in Santa Cruz County.

The Department of Food and Agriculture Monday worked out the quarantine idea and will submit it for approval to the state Office of Administrative Law, a process that could take several days.

The proposed quarantine area includes the community of Felton in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Gera Curry, the Department of Food and Agriculture's spokeswoman for insect eradication projects, said the quarantine is needed because the courts have forbidden the state to use carbaryl, a chemical

pesticide, to wipe out the moth.

The DFA's quarantine proposal came after the Santa Cruz County government won a court suit barring the use of carbaryl in the eradication project, on the grounds that there was reasonable doubt about its safety. The Santa Cruz County Superior Court ruled on March 8 that the work should be done with B.t. (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), a biological insecticide.

The DFA had proposed to spray B.t. from the air in the region around Felton, but wanted to supplement it with ground spraying of carbaryl, which it argued had a demonstrated record of effectiveness and safety.

An appeals court in San Jose Friday refused to intervene in the case without a trial, which cannot be held until the moth's 1985 life cycle has been com-

pleted.

"Carbaryl kills on contact," Curry said. "With B.t., the moth has to eat it."

She said that when the quarantine has been approved, the state will distribute notices door-to-door in the region.

A telephone number is being established for residents to report movements of wood, motor homes, boats, recreational vehicles, and other common carriers of gypsy moth eggs so they can be inspected.

The DFA decided on the eradication campaign after six moths were trapped in the Felton area last year.

"We'd think this would be a fairly small number of moths for a quarantine, but we're not going to stand in their way," said Santa Cruz County Counsel Jonathan Wittwer.