

Oak Processionary Moth – Operational Programme 2017/18

1 OPM Operational Programme Aims & Objectives for 2017

Aim: To provide an operational function to the broader OPM programme and working with policy review and evidence functions, support the development of a long term strategy for the management of OPM

- To limit the rate of spread and reduce the impact of OPM on tree health and human/animal health
- To robustly deal with new findings that threaten the development of a new outbreak centre
- To maintain the range of control activities (survey, control communications etc) and avoid major deviation in approach that could pre-empt or compromise long term policy decisions
- To provide an operational ‘test and development’ function to build knowledge and evidence
- To continue building a partnership approach to OPM management, and land owner/manager expertise in managing OPM

Outline of the approach

The current ‘geography’ of the Government’s OPM Control Programme is divided as follows:

Core zone (adaptation) – where there is little/no direct government intervention but we support landowners with advice and communications coordination.

Control zone – (targeted government intervention) – where our intervention is to slow the rate of spread and reduce the impact of OPM. ‘Protected zone’ – is effectively part of the control zone, but with greater emphasis/presumption towards employing a robust response to new outbreaks (where there is highest risk of creating new epicentres for spread), subject to the factors set out in section 5 below.

Contingency Plan

The OPM Contingency Plan is being reviewed, so these plans may be adjusted to ensure alignment. In the meantime, the following factors will be considered when determining (i) whether a new finding is a new outbreak (i.e. introduced) and (ii) the appropriate response:

- Distance from known infestation
- Chances / timescale of re-infestation
- Relationship with protected zone
- Target environment (woodland, urban, semi-rural)
- Site designations / biodiversity status
- Distribution & density of infestation
- Host tree distribution in the surrounding area
- Risk to human and animal health
- Age of nests found
- Impact on tree health
- Time of year
- Likely success of control activity
- Resource availability

Legal Considerations

Protected Zone Status

These plans are intended to demonstrate a reasonable response to OPM and a sound rationale for continued PZ status. The boundary of the Protected Zone may need to be reviewed and adjusted - and these plans changed – if it is not felt it meets PZ needs and still wants to be retained.

Statutory Plant Health Notices (SPHNs)

SPHNs have been issued to all affected landowners except those in the core zone. SPHN wording has been adjusted to make it easier to understand by recipients, and reflects whether control activity will be Defra funded or funded by the landowner.

The OPM operational budget will be approximately £1.2 million for the financial year 2017/18

2 Rationale for OPM operational activity:

Core activity

Baseline activity to maintain the database, field based survey recording, systems support and information provision.

Material supplies e.g. traps, lures, rope

Control work - Spraying Spring 2017

All known infested trees from 2015 and 2016 outside the core zone will be sprayed, plus all other host trees within 50m. We will normally use Bt and sometimes Dimilin. There are no plans to use Deltamethrin but may be considered in the protected zone as part of a robust response package. Appropriateness of spraying vs nest removal on designated sites will be judged on a case by case basis.

Control work - Nest Removal Summer 2017

Nest removal will take place once spraying is no longer effective and prioritised based on risk.

Visual Survey - Summer 2017

Survey of trees that are sprayed spring 2017, to assess control efficacy and to inform where nest removal is required (survey trees within 100m of sprayed trees). No provision is made for speculative visual survey i.e. areas outside where we know infestation already exists.

Visual Survey of suspected outbreaks – Summer 2017 and Winter 2018

Given our experience of previous years, there is a high probability that new outbreaks will require investigation, most likely from the trapping programme or external reports of infestation. Investigation will be prioritised depending on site circumstances, as per the contingency plan factors, to demonstrate an appropriate response for PZ purposes.

Pheromone traps Summer 2017

Pangbourne, to assess whether OPM has been eradicated from this area:

- Deployment of 100 traps
- Visual survey Winter 2018, informed by the trap captures

Calibration work, to systematically explore the relationship between male moth captures in traps and nest densities on the ground:

- 150 Traps deployed in low, medium and high density areas. Trap placement taking into account factors such as effect of light, oak density, vicinity to transport networks and waterways
- Visual survey of all traps - regardless of number of moths caught - of all oak trees within 200m of the trap in Winter 2018

Pheromone Trap Transects, to improve understanding of male moth distributions; explore how male moth density declines as a function of distance from the core zone:

- Deployment of 200 traps
- 5 transects, each 40km in length with 40 traps per transect
- Builds on the transects analysis by Cambridge on 2016 data

3 Communications & Liaison

A similar communications package for 2017 will be adopted as 2016, adjusted to take account of new stakeholders where OPM has more recently been found.

Liaison activity 2017

External liaison – will be divided into 2 key groups:

- OPM Strategic Advisory Group – providing external comment on OPM policy and evidence development. Occasional input at key time points
- OPM stakeholder network – with an operational and communications interest in OPM. Regular liaison via e.g. newsletters, autumn workshop

Operational OPM map for 2017

