

# ON THE LOOKOUT FOR HUNGRY PESTS

It's never too early to begin thinking about your future. There are many opportunities to grow a career at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Read on to learn more about this exciting work.



**THIS GUY WORKS FOR USDA: YOU CAN TOO!**

## THE THREAT

Invasive pests threaten to devour our parks, crops, and neighborhood landscapes. These pests are plants, insects, or disease-causing microorganisms that move into a new ecosystem. They can harm the environment and eliminate foods that we eat. They can also destroy trees that give us wood to build homes, and flowers that make our gardens beautiful.

Invasive pests cost our country billions of dollars each year.

## THE SPREAD

Invasive pests slip into the country inside or on fruits, vegetables, and plants that we buy from other countries or that people bring when they travel. Pests can also "catch a ride" in a package sent through the mail. When we go camping and get close to nature, it also means nature can get close to us. Pests may try to hitchhike a ride home in our boots, clothes, or other camping gear.

## FIGHTING BACK AGAINST HUNGRY PESTS

The team at USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) defends America's animals and plants from Hungry Pests and diseases. USDA works with partners abroad to keep Hungry Pests far away. USDA tells U.S. Customs and Border Protection what to look for when checking animal and plant products for invasive pests at the border. When pests slip through, USDA finds the pests and spreads the word to make sure everyone is doing their part to stop the Hungry Pests.



## THE POWER OF MAPS

USDA uses maps to show the public where invasive pests are, and whether they are in their community. Mapping helps raise awareness. Maps also help predict the areas of the United States where Hungry Pests and disease are likely to go. The climate, including temperature, put certain areas at more risk. APHIS maps also show which areas are under federal quarantine in each state. A quarantine is an area where a pest is present and APHIS is working to control or eliminate it.



This map shows areas currently quarantined for European gypsy moth.

## HUNGRY PEST DETECTIVES: THEIR PROCESS

USDA acts fast to stop pest spread. They follow an important process.

- 1 SEE**  
 A person (like you or me) notices signs of an invasive pest in the garden or at a park, on a walk, or while camping.
- 2 REPORT**  
 A person calls or emails the local USDA office.
- 3 COLLECT**  
 A USDA official collects a pest sample to figure out what kind of pest has been found.
- 4 CONFIRM**  
 USDA scientists identify the pest in a lab using tests, photos from a microscope, and sometimes DNA analysis.
- 5 ANNOUNCEMENT**  
 USDA tells local officials and the public that a pest has been found so everyone can help prevent the spread.

## PROTECTING OUR NATION'S RESOURCES AS A CAREER

Many different careers are important in the fight against Hungry Pests. Plant scientists, geneticists, veterinarians, and data analysts all work for USDA. Their work is actually related to subject areas you study in school. For example, if you have a geography class you may already be familiar with the work of a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialist. GIS specialists create maps and study their results. They use advanced mapping software that captures all kinds of geographic information, including pest locations. If you enjoy learning about plants, animals, or technology, then a career at USDA might be right for you.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has opportunities for students interested in learning more about careers in agriculture, science, technology, business, and many other fields.

Learn more: [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/civilrights/agdiscovery/ct\\_agdiscovery\\_program](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/civilrights/agdiscovery/ct_agdiscovery_program)

