



## OFFICE OF THE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER

### \*\*\*\*\* NEWS RELEASE \*\*\*\*\*

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### **SINGLE LIGHT BROWN APPLE MOTH** **DETECTED IN SONOMA COUNTY**

*Detection triggers placement of additional traps in the area*

A single Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM), an invasive pest native to Australia, has been detected in Sonoma County for the first time. Under state law, California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) has the responsibility and authority to control and eradicate invasive pests in California (Food and Agricultural Code Section 5321-5323). CDFA in cooperation with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and in coordination with Agricultural Commissioners and other state and local agencies, established the LBAM Project in response to California's LBAM infestation.

A cooperative eradication program run jointly by CDFA and USDA is already underway to suppress and eradicate infestations in nine counties along California's Central Coast and Bay Area. Currently nine counties within California are under regulatory action (quarantine and eradication plans), including: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Solano and San Mateo. Small, isolated infestations detected last year in Los Angeles and Napa counties have already been eradicated.

The trap that caught the male moth in Sonoma County was part of a statewide trapping array deployed by the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's staff to detect any new LBAM populations. This single detection triggered increased trapping by CDFA in the immediate area to determine if additional moths are present. CDFA will inspect these traps every one to two weeks. If no further LBAM are confirmed in the nine square mile area within a period of three life stages (approximately September 1, which is dependent on weather conditions), CDFA will not take further action based on their current plan.

If additional moths are found in the vicinity, CDFA would plan eradication efforts and Sonoma County would be quarantined according to state and federal protocols. This would limit the movement of plants, produce, yard waste and related articles from the area. Additional trapping would be performed to monitor the moth population. Eradication options include using pheromone twist ties for mating disruption, which have been utilized effectively in other counties and is the preferred treatment for small isolated infestations. For heavy infestations covering a significant geographical area, CDFA could consider aerial spraying.

The Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office is responsible for the detection of noxious pests in the county, and to provide education and outreach to the community and agricultural industry regarding these pests. The Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office has further ramped up its educational and outreach efforts to industry and the community due to this single detection, and we will work proactively and collaboratively with CDFA to ensure Sonoma County residents are informed regarding the ongoing status of this pest and any proposed actions by CDFA to control or eradicate it in our county. Since March 2007, when the pest was first confirmed in California, we have taken the following steps:

- Servicing approximately 600 traps to detect any new sites as early as possible
- Providing outreach to the community and the agricultural and nursery industry
- Responding to general inquiries from the community and industry

The Light Brown Apple Moth is native to Australia and is found in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Hawaii. The range of host plants is broad with more than two thousand plant species known to be susceptible to attack by this pest. It threatens California's environment including cypress, redwood and oak trees and the food supply. The pest destroys, stunts or deforms young seedlings; spoils the appearance of ornamental plants; and injures citrus, grapes, and deciduous fruit tree crops.

For more information on the light brown apple moth, including the State's 2008-2009 Action Plan, please visit [www.cdfa.ca.gov](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov).