



OFFICE OF THE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER

*******NEWS RELEASE*******

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SECOND LIGHT BROWN APPLE MOTH DETECTED IN SONOMA COUNTY

Detection triggers quarantine, plans for ground treatment, and placement of additional traps in the area

On April 21, 2008, a second Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM), an invasive pest native to Australia, was confirmed in Sonoma County. It was found in close proximity to the initial find in February 2008. 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 has been underway since March 2007 to suppress and eradicate infestations in nine counties along California's Central Coast and Bay Area. Currently, ten counties within California are under regulatory action (quarantine and eradication plans), including: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Solano. Small, isolated infestations detected last year in Napa and Los Angeles counties were eradicated using hand or ground applied treatments.

The trap that caught the second male moth in Sonoma County was part of the delimitation trapping array placed by CDFA after the initial find in February. This second detection will trigger state and federal quarantines in Sonoma County, which restrict the movement of fruits, vegetables, plants, and related articles from the area.

Additionally, based on this second moth find, CDFA will likely place pheromone-infused twist ties in a 200-meter area surrounding each of the two moths detected using ground crews. This treatment method has been utilized effectively in other counties and is the preferred treatment for small isolated infestations. Residents in the area will be notified in advance of the treatment, which is not expected to begin before June 2008. Moth pheromone, which is odorless and colorless, creates mating disruption by preventing male moths from mating with females. This method is highly specific to the targeted moth population and is not harmful to other organisms, and is approved for use in organic crops.

Because of the second moth CDFA has also increased trapping in the immediate area to detect any new infested sites as early as possible.

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. Our office will be working closely with all affected agricultural producers to help them meet state and/or federal requirements to move their commodities, and to ensure their business is impacted as little as possible.

Our office will continue its educational and outreach efforts to industry and the community, 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.

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 hundreds of plant species known to be susceptible to attack by this pest, including 250 crops. 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 grapes, citrus, and deciduous fruit tree crops.

For more information on the light brown apple moth please visit www.cdfa.ca.gov.