



OFFICE OF THE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER

P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: February 27, 2009

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NEW LIGHT BROWN APPLE MOTH QUARANTINE AREA TO BE ESTABLISHED IN SONOMA COUNTY

SANTA ROSA, Calif. --

Another Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) has been detected south of Sebastopol near Gravenstein Highway. 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 as well as 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.

The recent detection prompts the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to establish a new state quarantine area, triggered when a second male moth is detected within three miles of another male moth detection. The two Light Brown Apple Moths were detected approximately three miles south of Sebastopol near Gravenstein Highway. The first moth was detected in November 2008 and the recent moth was detected on February 17th. Agricultural production in the area includes wine grapes, apples, nursery stock, and vegetables.

When enacted, the quarantine includes restrictions on the movement of plants, produce, yard waste and related articles from the area by requiring inspections and certification of these materials. This is the second area currently under quarantine in Sonoma County, with the first being in the Carneros wine grape region. Additional traps will be deployed in the immediate area of the most recent detection to determine if additional moths are present.

The Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office is responsible for detecting noxious pests in the county, providing and coordinating inspection and certification of plant materials for sale and shipping, and leading educational and outreach efforts to the community and agricultural industry. After the quarantine boundaries are established, the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's staff will determine who may be impacted within the new quarantine area and will work with them to assist in avoiding disruption in the movement of their commodities. In 2008, over 2000 acres of cropland and 30 nurseries were inspected and certified, ensuring harvested crops, plant shipments, and other business activities were able to continue uninterrupted.

The Agricultural Commissioner's staff will continue it's educational and outreach efforts to industry and the community, and work proactively and collaboratively to ensure Sonoma County residents are informed regarding the ongoing status of this pest.

For more information on the Light Brown Apple Moth please visit www.cdfa.ca.gov or http://www.sonoma-county.org/agcomm/whats_new.htm .

The County of Sonoma is comprised of 26 departments and agencies that provide a full range of services to the community. It encompasses over 1600 square miles and is home to more than 475,000 residents. Sonoma County government has a history of providing excellent and responsive public service while operating under sound fiscal principles.

Located less than one hour north of San Francisco, Sonoma County combines in one location the beautiful Pacific coastline, award-winning wineries, majestic redwoods, historic towns, fine dining, and a wide variety of entertainment and cultural activities.

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