



OFFICE OF THE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LOCAL OFFICIALS URGE STATE ACTION ON LIGHT BROWN APPLE MOTH

SANTA ROSA, Calif. --

On February 6, 2007, the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) was found for the first time in the continental United States in Berkeley, California. Subsequent trappings in the Bay Area by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) revealed an LBAM infestation. LBAM has over 2,000 hosts, including native plants and over 250 crops. It is native to Australia, and found in New Zealand, Great Britain, New Caledonia, and Hawaii, and is known to cause economic and environmental damage.

Since February 2008, Sonoma County has had over 30 LBAM finds in many locations. As a result, Sonoma County has LBAM state quarantines in the following areas: Cotati/Rohnert Park, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Sebastopol, and Sonoma/Carneros area. This represents approximately: 440 winegrape growers (15,274 acres), 16 apple growers (96 acres), 64 nurseries, and 35 vegetable growers (200 acres). The quarantines cover an area of about 165 square miles. The quarantines place restrictions on the movement of plants, produce, yard waste and related articles from the area by requiring inspections and certification of these materials. The Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office has placed over 630 LBAM traps throughout most of the urban and rural areas of the county and CDFA/USDA has placed about 2,000 traps within the state quarantined areas to isolate any potential infestations.

On May 5, 2009 the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors were updated on the LBAM finds and quarantine, and the response by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. In addition, the Board was briefed on and supported a consensus document developed by a group of stakeholders that the Agricultural Commissioner's Office participated in. Assembly Member Noreen Evans convened a series of meetings to proactively address

public, industry, and environmental concerns relating to LBAM. A coalition of environmental and agricultural interests in Napa and Sonoma counties met in an effort to reach a wide-ranging consensus on the best approach of managing LBAM in Sonoma and Napa counties and to apply community pressure on the State to respond to the LBAM issue more effectively. The document, known as the Napa and Sonoma Counties Stakeholders Consensus Document, includes agreed upon set of principles, recommended actions, and recommendations to California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) on their LBAM Program Plan of Action. The consensus document had been endorsed by the following environmental and agricultural organizations: Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, Sonoma County Conservation Action, California Certified, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, California Native Plant Society, Sonoma County Winegrape Commission, Napa Valley Grape Growers, Napa County Farm Bureau, California Land Stewardship Institute (Fish Friendly Farming), and Sonoma County Farm Bureau.

On May 5, 2009 the Board unanimously supported the document and authorized the Board Chairman to send a second letter to CDFA Secretary, A.G. Kawamura, urging the State to expedite the environmental review process on the methods to be used to control and eradicate LBAM. Completion of this process is imperative to allow the state and federal government to effectively address methods to contain and control LBAM. If left unchecked, LBAM will continue to spread in the environment and cost agriculture businesses financially. These costs to the agricultural industry are estimated to be approximately a million dollars per year due to the quarantine restrictions. The 2007 Sonoma County Crop Report listed the value of winegrapes, apples, vegetables, nursery stock, and miscellaneous crops at approximately \$458 million.

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. The Agricultural Commissioner's staff is continuing its proactive outreach efforts and will be inviting Sonoma County growers and wineries to attend a meeting at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building on one of following dates: for growers only, May 12: 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; May 15: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.; June 3: 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.; and June 4: 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.; and for wineries only, June 25: 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

If you would like additional information, please visit http://www.sonoma-county.org/agcomm/whats_new.htm or contact the Agricultural Commissioner's Office at (707) 565-2371.

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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