



Alert: Aerial Spraying Light Brown Apple Moth

Dear Ecology Center members and friends,

Recently the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) announced plans to conduct aerial spraying in the Bay Area to combat the Light Brown Apple Moth. Aerial spraying of the pheromone-based product Checkmate would begin in August. The spraying is controversial, particularly because the product has not been tested for this use and health reactions have occurred from recent sprayings in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. **The Ecology Center agrees with the position taken by Pesticide Action Network, as outlined below, and does not support the aerial spraying.**

"Pesticide Action Network supports the use of pheromones (in, for example, ground applications) and other ecologically sound organic IPM approaches as far preferable to and ultimately more effective than use of dangerous organophosphates such as chlorpyrifos. However, Pesticide Action Network does not endorse further aerial applications of Checkmate due to remaining questions we have regarding inert ingredients in these products (their actual concentrations and possible adverse health impacts)."

Below you will find *background information, *groups that you can connect with and ways to get involved, and *listings for upcoming community meetings and hearings. Luckily there are effective citizen groups that have formed and plenty of ways to get involved! Particularly, you can learn more about the aerial spraying at informational meetings that are being held throughout the Bay Area. Get a full event calendar of meetings, hearings, and actions at <http://LBAMspray.com>. We also list events on our EcoCalendar at <http://ecologycenter.org/calendar>.

BACKGROUND

(from Pesticide Action Network)


According to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) is an exotic pest that has recently been discovered in portions of the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles. LBAM is a native pest to Australia and has been introduced into New Zealand, New Caledonia, Hawaii, the United Kingdom and Ireland. This moth can affect a wide variety of plants, flowers, fruits and vegetables. It was first identified in Berkeley, California in late 2006; by July 2007, traps set by agricultural officials had collected some 5,000 moths, mostly in Santa Cruz and Monterey along the Central Coast. In reaction, CDFA began by proposing use of chlorpyrifos and malathion -- two highly hazardous organophosphate pesticides -- to eradicate the moth. In September 2007, CDFA launched an additional measure: aerial application of pheromone-based products (two formulations of "Checkmate") over urban as well as rural areas of Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, in an attempt to control the moth by disrupting mating patterns. In January 2008, CDFA announced plans to try several alternative control approaches, as well as to resume aerial applications of a new formulation of CheckMate over the Central Coast in June and north into the San Francisco Bay Area in August. In February, several state legislators submitted bills to block the spraying.

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Pesticide Action Network is calling for an open, transparent and comprehensive review of all least toxic alternatives and for expedited research, development and implementation of less invasive approaches such as biological control and integrated pest management (IPM) that exclude use of organophosphate pesticides. PAN supports the use of pheromones (in, for example, ground applications) and other ecologically sound organic IPM approaches as far preferable to and ultimately more effective than use of dangerous organophosphates such as chlorpyrifos. However, PAN does not endorse further aerial applications of Checkmate products due to questions regarding inert ingredients



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in these products (their actual concentrations and possible adverse health impacts). We also question the efficacy of aerial spraying in general, the eradication goal itself, and the lack of complete transparency from CDFA. We call for precautionary steps by CDFA and analysis by an independent science panel before any further spraying. Full disclosure of the extent of the LBAM infestation, management strategies and health risks must be shared in open discussion with the affected communities before further wide-scale spraying resumes.

Least hazardous approaches to LBAM control

Pheromones (sexual perfumes for insects) have been used in integrated pest management (IPM) mating disruption technologies and are believed to pose no substantial environmental or human health threats. Pheromones are among the least hazardous of remedies and their use is far preferable to the use of toxic synthetic chemical pesticides. Pheromone products have been approved for use in organic farming by the National Organic Program. (The pheromone is not itself a pesticide -- it does not actually kill or even harm the moth. Female moths produce pheromone scents to attract males; additional release of pheromones into the environment confuses male moths seeking mates; by disrupting their mate-finding ability, it reduces their reproduction and thus ultimately moth population levels).

PAN supports the least invasive methods of application of these organic remedies, such as pheromone traps, twist-ties (Isomate LBAM Plus), introduction of parasitic wasps and sterile moths, and localized ground-level spraying of the organic insecticide, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt). Most locations on CDFA's website have response plans that rely on these less-invasive methods (e.g., Vallejo, Sherman Oaks, San Jose, Dublin, Danville, Napa and Oakley), and as of February 2008, CDFA is trying some of these alternatives in Marin and along the coast of the San Francisco Peninsula.

MORE INFORMATION

Pesticide Action Network: <http://www.panna.org/resources/lbam>

California Department of Food and Agriculture: http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/phpps/PDEP/lbam/lbam_main.html

San Francisco Chronicle article, "State plans Bay Area pesticide spraying", 2/15/08, <http://sfgate.com>

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Connect with these groups and sign the petition:

Stop the Spray, stopthespray.org

East Bay Pesticide Alert, www.eastbaypesticidealert.org

Sign up for the listserv:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopoverheadspraying/>

or

send email to eastbayinfo@stopthespray.org

Attend meetings and hearings:

LBAMspray.com

Over the following months, the Ecology Center will continue to serve as a community hub for people seeking information and ways to take action. Please contact us!



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