



## **2008 LIGHT BROWN APPLE MOTH PROGRAM FACT SHEET**

### **SUMMARY**

- The Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) feeds on more than 2,000 different types of native and ornamental plants and trees including cypress, redwoods and oaks, and can attack more than 250 agricultural crops.
  - It threatens California's natural environment and food systems and is currently infesting 9 counties.
  - In order to combat the LBAM, CDFA and USDA have developed a program that uses pheromones to disrupt the mating cycle, thus reducing the moth population and eventually eradicating the pest.
  - Pheromone use is one of the most environmentally responsible tools that can be used to eradicate invasive pests, particularly in urban regions and parks.

### **BACKGROUND**

- The detection of the Light Brown Apple Moth was first confirmed by California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in early 2007.
  - A statewide survey for the Light Brown Apple Moth, a foreign, invasive insect species, in 2005 showed no signs of the moth.
- Once the LBAM was detected in early 2007, the CDFA and USDA declared an emergency and took immediate action to prevent the pest from spreading throughout California, United States, and North America. The LBAM eradication program goal is to eradicate this invasive insect pest.
  - Small populations of LBAM were eradicated from Los Angeles and Napa Counties using ground application methods in 2007. Consequently, quarantines in those two counties were lifted.
  - LBAM continues to infest 9 other counties in California, remaining a serious problem and a threat to our environment, food systems, and quality of life.

### **HEALTH CONCERNS**

- Health officials have established that the pheromone material (which is applied in a very dilute concentration) represents a very low risk of toxicity.
  - Prior to treatments, CDFA will work with local health officers to ensure that physicians and other health care providers are given information on the pheromone products and reporting requirements for illness complaints.
  - While there is no human or animal health risk from exposure to the pheromones' treatment, CDFA provides a hotline for citizens who may have questions about the program or wish to report an illness or complaint.
  - Citizens are encouraged to see their health care provider for illness complaints.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- In advance of an emergency pest treatment, CDFA will reach out to affected communities to communicate the LBAM eradication plan by holding town hall community meetings, provide English/Spanish mail notices (first-class mail), and other languages as needed.
  - o Additionally, CDFA will meet with reporters, editorial boards and radio shows, and we will encourage citizens to subscribe to the email notification service and utilize the hotline and website for current information.
  - o We share information about the treatments in advance with local homeless shelters, farm worker organizations and other groups that have been brought to our attention by local officials.

## CURRENT STATUS

- CDFA/USDA is continuing the LBAM program in 2008. Essential federal funding is expected this month.
- Based on CDFA/USDA experience in 2007, as well as the input received from a wide range of policy leaders, scientists and members of the public, CDFA/USDA will use several eradication methods depending on a number of factors including, the size of the infestation and proximity to bodies of water that are effective, environmentally responsible and help to protect our life systems.
- The LBAM program is under constant review - both in house by CDFA/USDA and by third party world-renowned scientific experts known as the Technical Working Group. The eradication techniques chosen for each infested area have been carefully considered by the Technical Working Group, in order to create the best program to eliminate the serious threat posed by LBAM.
  - o For example, in the short-term CDFA/USDA are planning to use hand-applied twist ties containing pheromones to disrupt the LBAM mating cycle at locations with small LBAM populations. Ground applications of male moth attractants and bio-control methods will be used, as these tools become available.
  - o Ground treatments with the pesticides Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), a naturally occurring bacteria, and spinosad, a material from naturally occurring bacteria, may be utilized in heavily infested areas where moth larvae have been detected.
- Further aerial pheromone treatments are planned for late spring or early summer starting in the southern end of the infested area and moving north. Four pheromone products are being evaluated in New Zealand to determine the best tool for aerial treatment.
- With the expected federal funding this month, CDFA and USDA will move forward with the LBAM eradication program for 2008. We will continue to focus our efforts to provide the public with the information needed to understand this program clearly, including open communication with public officials, the media and individual Californians through meetings, mailings, hotlines, the CDFA web site, and other means.
- Eradication of LBAM from California will be a challenge. There are a number of complex variables and restraints on the eradication effort that involve science and technology, availability of the products, geography, timing, and necessary funding.

► For more information, go to [www.cdfa.ca.gov](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov)