

**CDFA ANNOUNCES PUBLIC MEETINGS IN SALINAS AND SANTA CRUZ FOR  
LIGHT BROWN APPLE MOTH ERADICATION PROGRAM**

SACRAMENTO, October 10, 2007 – The California Department of Food and Agriculture is announcing a series of public meetings for October 22-26 to discuss planned Light Brown Apple Moth pheromone applications for the North Salinas/Boronda, Prunedale/Royal Oaks and greater Santa Cruz areas. The applications are scheduled for November 4-9. Residents of the treatment zones will receive notices in the mail informing them of the upcoming meetings.

The schedule is as follows:

Monday, October 22 - Santa Cruz – Cocoanut Grove Grand Ballroom. 400 Beach Street.

5 pm to 7 pm – Informational Open house

7 pm to 8 pm – Formal Presentation

8 pm to 10 pm – Public Comment

Tuesday, October 23 – Santa Cruz – University Inn and Conference Center 611 Ocean Street

4:30 pm to 7:30 pm – Informational Open House

7:30 pm to 8:30 pm - Formal Presentation

8:30 pm to 11 pm – Public Comment

Wednesday, October 24 – Salinas – Echo Valley Elementary School 147 Echo Valley Road

5 pm to 7 pm – Informational Open house

7 pm to 8 pm – Formal Presentation

8 pm to 9 pm – Public Comment

Thursday, October 25 – Salinas – Salinas Community Center – 940 N. Main Street

4 pm to 6 pm – Informational Open house

6 pm to 7 pm – Formal Presentation

7 pm to 9 pm – Public Comment

Friday, October 26 – Salinas – Cesar E. Chavez Elementary School – 1225 Towt Street

5:30 pm to 7:30 pm – Informational Open house

7:30 pm to 8:30 pm – Formal Presentation

8:30 pm to 10 pm – Public Comment

CDFA and the USDA are working together on the eradication program for the light brown apple moth – using a pheromone called Checkmate LBAM-F that is specific to the apple moth and a few closely related moths.

While conventional insecticides are designed to kill insects, pheromones are designed to distract or confuse them so that they cannot breed. In nature, the pheromone is released by the female moth to attract a mate. The “scent” is undetectable to humans and is highly specific to the light brown apple moth, so it does not affect other kinds of insects or animals. The aerial releases are intended to surround the local moth population with pheromone so that the male moths can't locate the female moths. The moth population will decline and collapse as the rate of breeding slows and eventually subsides. The pheromone remains effective for about a month.

The pheromone, an odorless material called Checkmate LBAM-F, has been reviewed and approved by the federal EPA and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation; and has been accepted for use by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Forestry. The product has been registered for over a decade with no reports of any health or environmental effects. Toxicologists have stated that the pheromone shows no evidence of toxicity to people, pets or plants, and that humans are unable to react to or even recognize insect pheromones. Additionally, widely respected environmental groups are accepting this approach: including the Natural Resources Defense Council, Monarch Watch, and the Monterey County-based Otter Project.

Over the past few months, Central Coast and East Bay communities have been part of a regional quarantine that has helped keep the infestation from spreading to other areas of the state. The pheromone treatments are the next step toward eradication. Pheromone releases in other infested areas will be planned as the program progresses.

The light brown apple moth is of particular concern because it can damage a wide range of crops and other plants including the Central Coast's prized cypress as well as redwoods, oaks and many other varieties commonly found in our urban and suburban landscaping, public parks, and natural environment. The list of agricultural crops that could be damaged by this pest includes grapes, citrus, stone fruits (peaches, plums, nectarines, cherries, apricots) and many others. The complete "host list" contains well over 1,000 plant species and more than 250 fruits and vegetables. The pest damages plants and crops by feeding on leaves, new shoots and fruit.

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***The California Department of Food and Agriculture protects and promotes California's \$31.8 billion agricultural industry. California's farmers and ranchers produce a safe, secure supply of food, fiber and shelter; marketed fairly for all Californians; and produced with responsible environmental stewardship.***