

California Alliance To Stop the Spray (CASS)

For Immediate Release

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CDFA to Aerial Spray Long Lasting, Untested Chemicals, Public Interest Groups Outraged

Public interest groups today reacted to the CDFA's announcement that aerial spraying will remain at the center of its efforts to eradicate the light brown apple moth, which is considered a threat to California agriculture.

"It seems like the state learned nothing from the first rounds of spraying, which led to more than 600 illness complaints by citizens in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties, many of them severe," said Bonnie Keet of California Alliance to Stop the Spray.

Keet continued, "Under a declared emergency, the CDFA rushed into spraying hundreds of highly populated neighborhoods last fall with pesticides that had never been tested on humans, and now they plan to continue doing so for many years to come. How is this consistent with Article One of the California Constitution, which says that citizens have a right to safety?"

The CDFA has said that it is currently testing new synthetic pheromone mixtures in New Zealand, with the goal of finding a new spray substance that lasts longer in the environment once it has been sprayed.

Santa Cruz City Council Member Tony Madrigal states, "Clearly this is a blatant attempt from the CDFA to make the public forget their families and children are constantly being exposed to untested chemicals every day, every minute, every hour. Just because the planes aren't spraying us overhead doesn't mean the chemicals aren't still affecting our communities."

Meanwhile, the CDFA is also testing new methods of eradication, including pheromone-scented traps laced with a pesticide to kill the moths, and the introduction of a species of wasp that is a natural predator of the moths.

"We applaud the CDFA for its willingness to test safer eradication measures, but we are utterly dismayed that the state of California, under Governor Schwarzenegger's leadership, continues to carry out a potentially grave experiment by spraying human beings with untested pesticides," said Lori Cioffi of LBAMspray.com.

Cioffi noted that the aerial spraying goes against internationally accepted codes of ethics, which prohibit experimentation on human subjects without their informed consent. "Citizens should be outraged that they, their families and neighbors are being subjected to untested and potentially harmful substances against their will," she said.

The CDFA began aerial spraying in September last year and has so far completed three rounds, two in Monterey County and one in Santa Cruz County. Aerial spraying could also take place in densely populated areas of San Francisco and the East Bay, where many moths have been found.

Although the CDFA is acting under a declared emergency, saying that the light brown apple moth is a new pest that has been in the state for only about a year, experts such as James Carey, a professor of entomology at University of California Davis, say that the moth has likely been in California for many years and is far too established to be eradicated.

CDFA's recent decision to slightly delay future pesticide sprayings of residential areas was a welcome sigh of relief for the California Alliance to Stop the Spray (CASS), a group that was formed just a few weeks ago by concerned citizens from Monterey and Santa Cruz. While this short-term victory is well received, the work of CASS is not over, according to CASS representative Roy Upton. "We must continue to educate the public, our local, state, and federal representatives and agencies about the inherent dangers of pesticide use and continue to move California towards a truly environmentally sustainable agricultural market, while safeguarding the health of Californians. While our initial goal of stopping the

next round of spraying has been accomplished, we must ensure the State's current eradication program is not simply substituted with another equally destructive program. The real work of CASS has just begun."

A summary of the 643 complaints of illnesses received by state agencies and public interest groups can be seen on www.lbamspray.com.