

State: Moth here to stay

Agriculture officials will focus on controlling pest

Light Brown Apple moth
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✓ WATSONVILLE — California has given up trying to eradicate the light brown apple moth and will focus on controlling the pest instead.

The switch in strategies was revealed Tuesday as state agriculture officials announced certification of an environmental study of its plan to fight the Australian native.

In certifying the study, agriculture officials also took controversial aerial spraying off the table and say they are only considering ground-based treatments and the release of sterile moths to disrupt breeding.

“At this point, eradication is not viewed as feasible so the program is shifting focus,” said Steve Lyle, spokesman for the state Department of Food and Agriculture.

State agriculture officials had hoped to rid California of the moth by 2015, but Lyle said the increase in population size and spread in the past two years has made that impossible.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture came to the same conclusion, announcing its decision to abandon eradication as a goal last week. In a press release, the department said eradication couldn't be pursued “until new tools, such as sterile insect technology, are fully developed and

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STEVE LYLE,
Department of
Food and
Agriculture