

Moth

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an impact.

"We have to realize the spraying is going to happen again and again," he said.

Kawamura and his department have faced public criticism and opposition to the spray from those who cite safety concerns and a perceived lack of public outreach when the eradication plan was set in motion earlier this year.

"This project has opened my eyes to the lack of trust of government, to the lack of trust in science," Kawamura said.

Jay Van Rein, a Department of Food and Agriculture spokesman, said it likely would have been impossible to form an advisory committee earlier in the eradication planning because of the complicated and time-consuming logistics of identifying how widespread the infestation was. The moth was first detected in spring, and by July had turned up in 11 counties.

The pheromone the state has sprayed is intended to mimic the scent of female moths and send male moths into a state of sexual confusion, luring them away from females disrupting their ability to mate.

State officials have maintained that studies on the use of the synthetic pheromones in the CheckMate OLR-F and CheckMate LBAM-F products they have sprayed are safe. But the public has questioned those studies. Tere-

sa Thorne of the Alliance for Food and Farming says those questions need to be better addressed.

"We'd like to see more done so there is a better comfort level among the general public," said Thorne, who is also involved on the task force.

Shimek said such studies need to be made public.

Another aspect of the project that has come under question is how great the need is to eradicate the moth — and if that is even possible. Some scientists say the infestation is too widespread and can't be eliminated. A technical advisory group for the Department of Food and Agriculture says otherwise.

Bob Dowell, program supervisor of integrated pest control for the Department of Food and Agriculture, acknowledged that the light brown apple moth has never been eradicated anywhere — nor has it ever been attempted.

"Having not been done somewhere else before doesn't mean it's not possible," he said. "There might not have been the right conditions, and we might have them."

State officials have said if the moth is not controlled, it could potentially cause up to an estimated \$640 million in damage annually to the state's environment and fruit crops. California could also be subject to restrictions from international trading partners.

A state declaration of an emergency that allowed the eradication project to move forward without first preparing an environmental impact report has also come under

fire. That point is also at the center of a lawsuit filed in September by the environmental group Helping Our Peninsula's Environment.

The declaration allowed the eradication to begin, but the group contends it is a violation of California's Environmental Quality Act, which it says requires a detailed environmental analysis.

Jim Rains, an environmental scientist with the Department of Food and Agriculture, said before the spraying began that the state consulted with organizations such as the Department of Fish and Game, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and others who allowed the project to go forward.

He said an environmental impact report will be prepared and a draft could be available by June 2008.

"Initial studies have found no potentially significant effects," he said.

Laurie Gibson of the Coalition for Sustainable Action, formed by members of Seaside's Stop Overhead Spraying, and the Peninsula group Concerned Citizens Against Aerial Spraying, said it would have been preferable for the environmental impact report to have been completed before the spraying.

"I'm encouraged that it is underway now and that CDFA is aware of the need for transparency," she said.