

✓ GYPSY MOTH Pesticide Issue Goes To Court Judge to hear pros, cons of carbaryl use

WOULD carbaryl pose a health risk if the state ground-sprays the pesticide this month on 175 acres in Felton to wipe out the gypsy moth? The answer depends on whether the question is asked of county or state officials.

Both sides will have their say March 13 when Superior Court Judge Donald O. May will hear a claim filed by the county against the state which says the state would violate its own safety regulations if it uses carbaryl.

The state's food and agriculture department believes carbaryl can be used safely if it is diluted and sprayed by hand. Gera Curry, a state spokesperson, said the carbaryl-to-water ratio state workers plan to use is .12 percent (to 99.88 percent water) as compared to the 5 percent carbaryl to water concentrated in a pet's flea collar.

This fails to impress the county

Pesticide

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bacillus thurengiensis (Bt), a safer pesticide.

Of special concern is the extent of carbaryl exposure to the San Lorenzo River — located in the quarter-mile spray area — from which Santa Cruz draws 45 percent of its drinking water.

"The expectation is that the department will spray only a limited amount (carbaryl)," said Arnie Leff, county health officer. "The total dilution factor will range from very small

amounts to non-detectable." Leff's opinion tallies with the state's prediction that traces from the spraying will range from 0 to 2 parts per billion.

But Al Haynes, watershed analyst for the San Lorenzo Valley Water District, believes the potential runoff of carbaryl into the river is cause for "valid concern." He said the state's water monitoring program cannot register correct carbaryl levels in the river. Neither Haynes nor Leff discounted the possibility of an accident during the spray process that could pollute the river with carbaryl. •