

LIGHT BROWN APPLE MOTH

Blackberry-crop damage pinned on invasive pest

Economic loss has growers on alert

Light Brown Apple Moth
By DONNA JONES

djones@santacruzsentinel.com

6-16-09

✓ WATSONVILLE — The loss of 20 percent or more of the fruit in an organic blackberry field near Watsonville to damage caused by the light brown apple moth has sent a shudder through the agricultural community.

While the invasive pest from Australia has grown in numbers and spread to new territory since it was first discovered in a Berkeley backyard in 2007, this is the first evidence of commercial crop damage.

“This is a unique situation,” said Larry Hawkins, a spokesman for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. “We’ve seen large numbers of light brown apple moth but before now there has not been noticeable damage. Now there is. In the case of this particular field over

SEE MOTH ON A2