

SPRAYING

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Cruz areas. The largest area to receive the aerial spraying in Santa Cruz County is a 41.5-square-mile section that includes Aptos, Soquel, Capitola, Live Oak and Santa Cruz.

A pheromone is an insect secretion that enables the moths to reproduce. When dispersed from airplanes in its manmade form, the chemical — called Checkmate LBAM-F — is expected to confuse male moths and decimate the pest's population, halting its expected spread and the resulting damage to the environment and a host of crops, CDFA said.

The county argued that apple moth eradication did not constitute an emergency, so the state needed to complete an environmental impact report under the California Environmental Quality Act. The county's lawsuit also argued that Checkmate "may be harmful to humans when applied aerially, and ... that at the very least it is an open question at this point, as this type of spraying has never been done in an urban setting before last month in

Monterey County."

Santa Cruz County Assistant Attorney Jason Heath shared Burdick's verdict with about 50 people who gathered for the hearing.

The judge "determined that we were not able to meet our burden of proof regarding health complaints and regarding the CEQA process," Heath told the crowd.

Andrew and Teyara Hardy of Santa Cruz said they brought their 2-year-old son to the courtroom in hopes of seeing the spraying stopped. Teyara said the family was concerned about long-term effects on human health from the pheromone spray.

In Monterey County, some residents have reported respiratory illness, congestion, irritation when breathing and to their eyes and ears, headaches, muscle fatigue, dizziness, itching skin, rashes and nausea following spraying there, according to Santa Cruz County's lawsuit.

Last month, Monterey County Superior Court Judge Robert O'Farrell ordered a temporary injunction to delay continued spraying of pheromones on the Monterey Peninsula, but later lifted the injunction after deter-

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— Agriculture Secretary **A.G. Kawamura**

mining that the ingredients used in the pheromone Checkmate LBAM-F, made by Oregon-based Suterra, did not contain chemicals known to be harmful to the public.

Following that ruling, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger directed CDFA to immediately resume eradication efforts and to make public the list of ingredients in the pheromone being used.

"The court's decision further establishes that this eradication project is a necessary and important step in protecting the environment, habitat and agriculture of California," Agriculture Secretary A.G. Kawamura said Thursday. "Invasive species such as this moth present an urgent and persistent threat, so we appre-

ciate the court's swift action to preserve next week's scheduled treatment. The pheromone used in this eradication project is a remarkable alternative to conventional pesticides, it doesn't even harm the moth, it merely confuses the male moth so it can't find a mate. It truly is the most environmentally friendly eradication project that we've ever conducted in this state."

Martin Bernal, assistant city manager for Santa Cruz, said the City Council remains committed to pursuing "combined legal strategies" with the county to try and stop future aerial applications of the pheromone.

"We'll pursue the CEQA arguments," although the city will let the county take the lead as the health agency, he said.

Moths have been found in Watsonville and Castroville, but CDFA doesn't plan to spray those areas until next year, Lyle reported.

A science panel called the technical working group "advised starting on the southern end and the northern end, edges of the infestation and moving toward the center," Lyle said. This panel also urged getting an application down in Santa Cruz as soon as possible due to the heavy infestation there, he said.

"Any place that hasn't been treated yet that is infested with LBAM in that area will be treated next year," Lyle said.

Next week, a smaller area of Prunedale than originally planned — 22.35 square miles — will undergo the spraying because the state does not have as much Checkmate LBAM-F available as anticipated, Lyle said.

Residents of the treatment zones will receive notices in the mail informing them of the spraying schedule.

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For information on the light brown apple moth eradication plan from CDFA, visit www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/PDEP/lbam/lbam_main.html.