

State public outreach and response programs

- A Web site with information about the moth, which can be found at www.cdafa.ca.gov/LBAM.
 - An e-mail and phone hot line to log health complaints to be monitored daily LBAM@cdafa.ca.gov, [800] 491-1899 ext. 0. The hot line will log health complaints, which will be compiled and analyzed by a medical toxicologist. Complaints could be forwarded to the local county agricultural commissioner for investigation or the county public health officer.
 - Fact sheets addressing health and science issues are being developed for distribution and posting on the Web site.
 - Community meetings have been set and mailers sent to all homes in the affected communities.
 - Aerial treatment maps will be posted on the Web site showing the previous night's spray path. The maps will present a schematic showing each 100-foot wide path the planes make. Each pass will receive a single spray of treatment; nozzles are turned on and off using a computerized system guided by GPS technology.
 - E-mail updates to subscribers announcing intended areas of treatment, weather permitting. The morning after the treatment, follow-up e-mails will be sent to subscribers with results of the applications. E-mails will include a link to a map showing the progress of the treatment. Those interested in receiving e-mail updates may sign up at: http://www.cdafa.ca.gov/phpps/PDEP/lbam/lbam_main.html
- SOURCE: California Department of Agriculture
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and Northern California. The only answer is the aerial spraying of the pheromone, they say, which is manufactured by the Bend, Ore.-based Suterra LLC.

Independent chemists contacted by the Sentinel aren't too worried about the pesticide, saying there are worse chemicals that could get into the environment and that today's society is such that residents shouldn't fear every chemical.

"Every human activity has some risk, but this in my view is reasonable in terms of risk versus benefits," Greg Moller, an associate professor of environmental chemistry and toxicology at the University of Idaho, told the Sentinel. "We have to be careful of accusing every chemical that's being used in an industrial society as a bad chemical."

Chemical concern

But to some in Santa Cruz, any chemical is a bad chemical, especially if you're sensitive to them and they're being sprayed on you without your consent.

"I know the state has determined this pesticide to be safe, but if you look historically at it all, we were

also told that methionine and DDT and many other substances were safe, only to have their endorsement withdrawn," says Cecily Ruttenberg, a Santa Cruz resident. "The difference for U.S. citizens and residents of Santa Cruz County is that in most of the above issues we have some choice. If you are in a position like me, 5 months pregnant with two small children, one of whom has chemical sensitivities, I have some choice. I can choose to buy only organic food in order to avoid pesticides. I can choose not to vaccinate my children. I can choose not to give my 4-year-old cough medicine or buy toys made in China."

"Unfortunately, when it comes to the apple moth, I have no choice. A pesticide will be rained down over me, and my children for six nights and I have absolutely no say in the matter."

But state Agriculture Secretary A.G. Kawamura insists that the pesticide is "nontoxic," and that the effort being carried out is the "safest in the history of California."

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