

How did that moth get here, anyway?

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Why is it that Santa Cruz County became the light brown apple moth's favorite home?

USDA spokesman Larry Hawkins said that remains a mystery.

"We know that Santa Cruz County is the most heavily infested area and you can try to leap some assumptions, but they are assumptions," he said.

Hawkins said it might be just that Santa Cruz County is the best habitat for the moth or that it is where the insect

has been established for the longest period of time.

Hawkins said it was also possible that we are just finding the moths more here because there are more moth traps to find them. When the moths were initially found, more traps were put up and as more are found, more traps are put up. Hawkins said that so many traps could be why so moths are being found.

However, this has not been the case in other areas where moths have been found. The sightings have not really increased with the addition of

more traps in most other counties, just in Santa Cruz.

"As it turns out, the area where we find more and more moths continually is focused mainly in Santa Cruz," said Hawkins.

But why?

"We don't know — the range of preferred hosts might be different there," Hawkins said. "What we do know is that that is an area where the bulk of detections have been made that is where we are going to have to do the most work with the eradication program."

didn't have the original problem that if something was found on your property it's immediate shutdown and spraying. At the end of that meeting they said 'great.' They said they would consider them and the next process is to take it to a federal government group of experts that develop policy recommendations," said Cavanaugh. "We're getting close now and they are actually listening to us. There is a real desire to make us partners in this. They really want some help from the nursery industry to eradicate this pest. By giving us workable regulations, it helps ensure they will be effective."

Hawkins said the USDA is concerned about the local Ag economy.

"We certainly want people to go to a nursery and buy product there and keep that business going," he said. "While we want to eradicate this pest, we need to preserve our local businesses."

\$10,000. He said larger dealers are looking at losses of \$50,000 or more and so far, the local nursery industry has lost about \$600,000 to \$800,000.

"It's cost us all," he said. "Whether there was a moth

found or not."

Cavanaugh, Jess Brown of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, County Ag Commissioner Ken Corbishley, Jeff Rosendale of Sierra Azul and Rosendale Nurseries and sever-

al other local nursery owners met with USDA and CDFA officials on Tuesday looking for further compromise.

"We hammered out some regulations that we thought were doable and workable that