

# Moth

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in both counties, leading to lawsuits and complaints from hundreds of people who believe they were sickened by the spraying. Last fall, Santa Cruz County was sprayed with CheckMate LBAM-F, a pheromone that works by confusing the moth and disrupting the mating process. It doesn't actually kill the light brown apple moth.

The state Department of Food and Agriculture received 330 illness reports after the moth-spraying program began in Monterey County. Hundreds more were contained in a report by a private

group called the California Alliance to Stop the Spray.

The state said that reviews of the pheromone showed it to be safe.

"They re-reviewed it," Lyle said of the state and federal governments team of experts.

Whether the illnesses were linked in any way to the spraying remains unknown.

The state said Monday it is eyeing a string of possibilities to supplement its spraying plan. Among them:

■ The state is keeping an eye on a new pheromone product under testing in New Zealand that stays in the environment longer than 30 days, which would mean fewer aerial treatments. CheckMate OLR-F, which was sprayed in

parts of Monterey County, and CheckMate LBAM-F, sprayed over parts of Santa Cruz County last year, were designed to last 30 days, the CDFA said.

■ In heavily infested areas, such as Santa Cruz County, a ground treatment may be utilized, though they wouldn't completely replace aerial spraying. Those treatments would use a natural bacteria and spinosad called bacillus thuringiensis, in areas where moth larvae have been detected.

■ Another method called a "male attractant treatment" is also being considered. It would involve a ground treatment with a pheromone mixed with a small amount of pesticide that would attract and then kill male apple moths, the state said. The mixture would be

applied out of reach, at a height about 8 feet, on utility poles and trees. The pesticide that would be utilized is permethrin, a common household product that is used frequently for flea control on family pets. This method, too, would not wholly replace aerial spraying.

■ Another possibility is use of Trichogramma wasps. They are stingless, the state said, and lay their eggs inside moth eggs. The wasp larvae hatch and eat the host egg from the inside. These wasps will not bother over-wintering monarch butterflies and they would not be released near threatened or endangered plants or butterflies and moths, the state said.

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