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# Felton residents complain they were sprayed

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FELTON — Many unsuspecting residents here got an unwanted shower Saturday morning when the state's initial aerial spraying against the gypsy moth ran two hours late.

The single helicopter used to spray the non-chemical bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* over 250 acres of downtown Felton was delayed due to debris clogging the spray nozzles, according to John Connell, area spray manager for the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

The scheduled daybreak to 8 a.m. spraying didn't get completed until 10 a.m. The helicopter didn't get off the ground until 7 a.m., said Connell.

Customers of several downtown Felton businesses unknowingly found themselves caught in the spraying. Other merchants said business was extremely slow until after the spraying was completed.

"People came in saying they thought they (the state) were through, so they went outside. Then, they got sprayed," said Frank Walker, owner of Felton Hardware. He noted, however, that people he talked to weren't all that concerned "because they knew it was B.t. and not carbaryl."

Dorothy Harrison, one of the owners of Roger's Feed and Supply, said, "Customers were irritated they didn't spray as

early as they said they would." She added that some even felt the state purposely delayed the spraying "because they lost in court."

Linda Bartlett, a member of People for a Safe Felton, said she went out at 9:15 a.m. to collect samples of the spray, thinking it had been completed. "The helicopter came right at me and I got blasted," she said.

Fifth (San Lorenzo-Scotts Valley) District Supervisor Joe Cucchiara said this morning that it is "critical" the spraying is on schedule. "I don't think anybody likes to be sprayed with anything," he said. "It's an insult to one's personal space."

Connell maintains that "the bugs have been worked out." He is confident this Saturday's spraying will go much more smoothly — running from 6 to 8 a.m., weather permitting.

"All you can do is your best," he said. "Sometimes there are kinks in the operation and you have to work them out. We're sorry about the delays, but they were unavoidable."

Connell said the helicopter was grounded four times when some sort of plastic debris kept getting clogged in the spray nozzles. He said the problem finally was corrected about half-way through.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture plans to aerial spray B.t. four to six times each Saturday. The county

and Felton residents successfully fought off the state's plans to use the insecticide carbaryl. B.t. is a bacterium that only affects caterpillars, according to the state.

As of this morning, there was still no official word concerning a planned loose quarantine of Felton. The state reportedly

is pursuing a quarantine to make it illegal to take gypsy moth-host materials out of the area without getting them inspected first.

It is the gypsy moth caterpillars, which hatch this time of year, that can defoliate forested areas. The state declared Felton "infested" last summer after six moths were trapped there.