



larva (photo courtesy of USDA).

"I saw more LBAM last year than this year," said Harder. "We have native moths coming in at between 50-1 to 200-1 ratio of native moths to the LBAM."

### **Infestation Estimates Difficult**

Harder questioned whether the correct diagnosis of LBAM infestation was made at the May 22 incident.

Bolda readily acknowledges that, "It is almost impossible to distinguish leafroller species from one another in the field."

When there is doubt, USDA protocol is to first send the larvae to a facility at Moss Landing. If they cannot positively identify it, they send the sample to a lab in Sacramento that does DNA testing.

"The CDFCA admits in several recent documents that their DNA analysis is under speculation because they don't have the native leafroller DNA to compare it to," objected Harder. "All they're doing is comparing the DNA that they find to known LBAM. They're not comparing it to known native leafrollers."

He reported that samples of larvae found at the Arboretum often come back as "suspect," not "confirmed."

Bolda put it in a less critical light.

"It's a matter of probabilities. It's a very powerful tool, but [about all they can say] is it's highly probable."

Much of the current tension about the recent LBAM developments centers about anticipation of a CDFCA environmental impact report that was expected to be released in June, but which has been slipped to August. That report will indicate the direction which the CDFCA hopes to take with regard to the moth.

"Efforts to control and eradicate the LBAM by the state cannot take place until such time as the state publishes the EIR and addresses the concerns that are raised by the public in that report," said Commissioner Corbishley.

### **What's In Store with the Report?**

CDFCA public affairs officer Steve Lyle declined to say what might be expected in the report, except to say, "With respect to aerial treatment, it will be considered only for remote areas of infestation not reachable any other way," which essentially restates existing policy.

However, Lyle also expressed his department's conviction that LBAM eradication remains a plausible goal. Others are more reserved.

Although the Monterey County Farm Bureau president endorsed that effort last year, John Eiskamp, the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau president, said simply "That's a question for the scientists."

One of those scientists is Harder, the Arboretum director. He is firmly convinced that the centerpiece of the forthcoming EIR's recommendations will be a sterile moth release program, where the production and

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