

# Voluntary carbaryl spray plan scrapped

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FELTON — A plan for voluntary ground spraying of the insecticide carbaryl on individual properties around downtown Felton to fight the gypsy moth has been scrapped by the state — but, not before causing a hubbub in the county.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture this week sent a letter to county officials informing them of the voluntary carbaryl-spray plan, but then changed its mind.

The plan would have allowed ground spraying of carbaryl with the consent of individual homeowners.

Deputy Attorney General Charles Getz said the voluntary plan originated because of the state's continuing concerns that spraying only the non-chemical *Bacillus thuringiensis* would not eradicate gypsy moths in Felton. A Superior Court judge banned the use of carbaryl.

Getz said the department decided to drop the voluntary spray plan only after sending the letter to the county.

"A scientific technical team within our plant protection branch looked at the plan and spotted a major weakness," Getz said. "And that was the hit-and-miss aspect of the voluntary plan. They figured that without unanimous consent from property owners, carbaryl would be ineffective."

Fifth (San Lorenzo-Scotts Valley) District Supervisor Joe Cucchiara said Wednesday that the state would have been "nothing more than petty criminals trying to dodge the law" if they had proceeded with the plan. He said the spraying would have "pitted neighbor against neighbor and caused an extremely volatile situation."

Cucchiara said the state operated like "Keystone Cops" by sending out the letter, then changing its mind.

Getz responded by telling *The Sentinel*, "It's much ado about nothing."

He apologized for the letter having been sent, but said it was sent in the spirit of informing the county early of its plans.

Presently, 250 acres around Felton is being aerially sprayed with the non-chemical B.t. each Saturday. The spraying is designed to fight the gypsy moth, which has the potential for widespread defoliation of forested areas.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture lost a decision last month, preventing it from spraying carbaryl due to health risks.

Cucchiara, however, contends the voluntary plan would have violated Visiting Monterey County Superior Court Judge Ralph Drummond's no-carbaryl ruling. He said officials would have been in contempt of court had they followed through with the "capricious and arbitrary act."

Getz denied that the voluntary spraying would have violated Drummond's order. He said individual property owners have

the right to decide what happens on their own property and reiterated that this plan would have been completely voluntary.

He added that supervised applications of carbaryl with homeowners' consent is "far superior" to unsupervised applications. Such unsupervised applications are possible now since carbaryl is an over-the-counter insecticide and homeowners can take it upon themselves to spray.

The state, meanwhile, has denied county requests to add ground spraying of B.t. to its aerial-spray program to insure eradication. Getz cited the lack of sufficient number of spray rigs to do the job "without robbing the state of its ability to treat apple maggots in Northern California and the Japanese beetle in Sacramento."

Only a five-acre parcel near the post office where a gypsy moth egg mass was found last summer will be ground-sprayed with B.t. That spraying occurred Wednesday and is scheduled four to six times on successive Wednesdays.

The state also is still working on a loose quarantine. If approved by the state Office of Administrative Law, the quarantine would make it illegal to take gypsy moth-host materials out of Felton without getting them inspected first. Host materials would include firewood, recreational vehicles, trailers and boats that have been stored outdoors within the "infested" area for a long period of time.