

FOR INFORMATION
DA-2007-11
March 22, 2007

SUBJECT: Light Brown Apple Moth in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, California

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

The purpose of this SPRO memorandum is to provide notification that on March 16, 2007, an outbreak of light brown apple moth (LBAM), *Epiphyas postvittana*, was positively confirmed in adjacent areas of Alameda and Contra Costa counties, California. Confirmation of this outbreak was made through diagnostic testing by the Agricultural Research Service's Systematic Entomology Laboratory in Washington, D.C.

APHIS is currently cooperating with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and local county agricultural commissioners to carry out a LBAM delimiting survey in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. These survey activities were initiated in response to a February 6, 2007, report from a private citizen, near Berkley in Alameda County, indicating that two suspect moths were captured in a blacklight trap on his property. Pheromone-baited traps were placed on March 1, 2007, in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, and weekly inspections began March 7, 2007. All subsequent LBAM detections have occurred in urban areas within approximately 7 ½ miles of the original detections.

On March 15, 2007, APHIS convened a technical working group of experts to discuss survey and control strategies in response to LBAM. This group will continue to meet on a regular basis to address this developing situation and consider mitigation strategies.

LBAM is native to Australia and is found in New Zealand, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Hawaii. The host range for LBAM is broad, there are over 250 plant species known to be susceptible to attack by this pest. The major domestic hosts of concern are stone fruit (cherries, peaches, plums, nectarines, and apricots), pip fruit (apples and pears), grapes, and citrus.

LBAM, if left unchecked, has the potential to cause significant economic losses to California due to increased production costs and the possible loss of international and domestic export markets. However, these impacts can be effectively mitigated through production-level management practices. At this point, this pest is considered to be transient: actionable and under surveillance. Regulatory strategies are being developed.

For additional details on the Federal response to the detection of LBAM, you may contact, Osama El-Lissy, Director of Emergency Management, at (301) 734-5459.

Richard L. Dunkle

Richard L. Dunkle
Deputy Administrator
Plant Protection and Quarantine