

CONGRESSMAN SAM FARR

17th Congressional District of California



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 2008

<http://farr.house.gov>

CONTACT: Tom Mentzer

tom.mentzer@mail.house.gov

202-225-2861

FARR: NEW LBAM PLAN TURNS THE CORNER

Aerial pheromone application over urban areas off the table

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The California Department of Food and Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have announced that aerial pheromone application to control the light brown apple moth will no longer take place over urban areas and will be limited to agricultural land and undeveloped regions as a tool of last result.

The decision was made following meetings over the past month between Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) and federal and state officials. It was announced by CDFA Secretary A.G. Kawamura and APHIS Administrator Cindy Smith, along with a new program that will employ sterile moths.

“The meetings I held in Washington over the past month have been fruitful,” Rep. Farr said following the announcement. “We were able to illustrate that the lawsuits and objections raised by aerial application have become a lightning rod for public protest, robbing focus from the goal of eradication. The decision that aerial application will not occur over urban areas will allow CDFA to focus on the other tools it has available to eliminate the threat this moth poses.”

“The bottom line for eradicating this pest has always been safety,” Rep. Farr said. “The public was never convinced that spraying was safe or the only option, and the result has been protests, anger and a series of lawsuits. It’s vital that we don’t delay in our efforts to control this pest. CDFA was correct to recognize that aerial application was becoming a distraction. A shift in strategy is the right move.”

The goal of eradication remains the same. A short-term strategy of maintaining quarantine boundaries will dovetail into long-term eradication efforts. With aerial pheromone application over urban areas off the table, attention will turn to alternative strategies. The pheromone will still be used in ground-based applications that have been used for years, with alternative pesticides employed in special circumstances. CDFA also announced that the sterile moth program, a new tool, will also be available earlier than previously predicted.

“This is the best possible outcome,” Rep. Farr said. “CDFA will be able to direct its full efforts toward ground-based eradication efforts and our communities will not have to worry about the planes overhead. I look forward to working with CDFA and USDA officials to keep the public informed as work proceeds.”

“I thank CDFA and USDA leaders who realized that they needed to adapt to the situation,” Rep. Farr said. “Working together is the only way we’ll be able to get rid of this moth. One thing we have all learned from this experience is that transparency is necessary from the get-go; the public must know what actions the government is taking.”

###