

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

E. coli contacts

I appreciate your quick response; as mentioned, I am interested in *E. coli* thresholds and tolerance for strawberry production.

You gave me the name of Bonnie Fernandez at bfernandez@cps.ucdavis.edu, executive director of the Center for Produce Safety, and will contact her. And what is the California Strawberry Commission e-mail or contact info?

Rob Koch,
Apple Leaf LLC, Wenatchee, Wash.

Editor's note: California Strawberry Commission is at www.calstrawberry.com.

Leave LBAM to experts

My friend, you're my favorite "cage rattler," but after reading your May 2008 editorial, "Exotic moth policy must change," I felt compelled to respond.

You take issue with the fact that light brown apple moth has been classified as a Class A pest by USDA and the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and imply that it is somehow at the root of a greedy export strategy. In stating this, you make no mention of the fact that the bug has been regulated as an "actionable pest of quarantine significance" since 1957. In 1984 and again in 2003, it was re-evaluated and remained classified as

such. In fact, long before LBAM triggered the current eradication program in California, it was considered an actionable pest of quarantine significance by Canada, Chile, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, South Korea and Thailand. Within the past 12 months the LBAM Technical Working Group, consisting of experts from the United States, Australia and New Zealand, recommended the pursuit of eradication based upon the fact that populations are currently small and are susceptible to effective control tools such as pheromone mating disruption.

You also point out that LBAM is "not a quarantine pest in Europe, where it exists in trading partner Great Britain." This is accurate, but LBAM is just one of many pests that are considered of quarantine significance in North America, but not in Europe. For example, pink bollworm and boll weevil are classified as quarantine pests in the U.S. and Mexico, but not in the European Union. Conversely, whitefly is regulated in the EU, but not in the U.S., Canada or Mexico.

Additionally, you challenged the efficacy and safety of the aerial application of pheromones as the "central military tactic." Given the fact that we're dealing with a relatively large, highly populated urban area, the use of anything

other than the most benign pheromone product is a non-starter. While this project is the first to incorporate pheromones to combat LBAM, they've been successfully used to eradicate pink bollworm in Arizona. The decision to employ aerial pheromone is really the only practical and currently available strategy to eradicate the pest.

With regard to safety, the U.S. EPA concluded in 2006 that Straight Chain Lepidopteran Pheromones, which is the class of pheromone that LBAM pheromone formulations belong to, are nontoxic to mammals, including infants and children. Further, EPA found that SCLPs have shown no evidence of affecting immune systems, functioning in a manner similar to hormones, or acting as endocrine disruptor.

Just about the only point that I can agree with you on is that people "do care about being bombed with pesticides of any kind."

This LBAM project is a very tough and divisive issue, but we have to let the professionals do their jobs.

Don Gordon, *president,*
Agricultural Council of California,
Sacramento

An apology

I read your article on the front page of the May California Farmer and was shocked to see that Marin County Farm Bureau was opposed to the state's plan for aerial spraying. I am extremely cu-

rious as to why you would put it in your magazine without trying to confirm it with us? We are in favor of a proactive ground-based approach beginning immediately, which may help to reduce the need for aerial spraying. Waiting until August will only allow the [light brown apple] moth to spread even more. Our goal is to help our farmers now.

Dominic Grossi,
president, Marin County Farm Bureau

Editor's note: Our source was a news release considered to be reliable, but clearly we should have confirmed the information with you. My guess is that some took your April 23 San Francisco Chronicle letter to mean opposition to aerial spraying when you were actually suggesting an immediate alternative. I regret and apologize for the error.

Please take our call so we can serve you

EVERY year we try to make contact with a large number of our readers to catch up on their operations. This survey is more in-depth than most, but it is an opportunity for us to get to know more about your business challenges so we can serve you better. Please talk to our survey folks when they call, and thanks for your help.

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