

**MEDIA CONTACT:** John Russo, StopTheSpray.ORG  
(831) 440-8935  
john@stopthespray.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 16, 2008

## **SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE RESPONDS TO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMENTARY ON APPLE MOTH SPRAY**

*CDFA reacts to StopTheSpray's new legislative strategy*

**May 16, 2008 - MONTEREY COUNTY, California.** Today, the Secretary of Food and Agriculture, A. G. Kawamura published a response to **StopTheSpray's** new strategy to focus on legislation protecting people's rights to choose whether to be exposed to the Light-brown Apple Moth (LBAM) spray.

In a lengthy reply to **StopTheSpray's** article published in the California Progress Report earlier this week, Secretary Kawamura made references to the hundreds of health complaints caused by the spray, by writing that "*Public health officials with three state departments ... could find no link between the claims and the treatments.*" He offered no explanation to the documented health complaints or to the emergency room visits by people with respiratory symptoms, including a one-year-old boy who almost died.

Referring to the apple moth that has caused no known damage to agriculture to date as a "*ravenous pest,*" Secretary Kawamura went on to declare his full support for the spray as a method for eradication of the apple moth, despite multiple reports that pheromone spraying has never been shown successful in eradicating it. Two separate judges in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties have legally established that no crop damage has been done in California and a state of emergency is unwarranted.

Describing the facts and numerous reports collected by the numerous opponents of the LBAM spray as "*misinformation,*" Secretary Kawamura stated that "due diligence by agricultural officials and third parties has proven these various claims false" but made no specific reference to which claims or facts he was referring to.

In the entire carefully drafted response, Secretary Kawamura made not one attempt to address the basic human rights issue: each individual has the ultimate right to decide what happens to their own body.

Addressing the obvious comparisons to science failures surrounding the use of DDT, Agent Orange and malathion on human populations, Secretary Kawamura simply said, "*those cases and this pheromone are very, very different things*" but offered no explanation how.

**Says John Russo, founder of StopTheSpray.org,** "Secretary Kawamura's response repeats the pattern of talking at the people, instead of listening to them. This program is a disaster for the rights of Californians. We all support farmers and agriculture. And we believe that *informed consent* is key in any program involving pesticide spray. In the end, the people must decide. And we must honor the need for "due respect to the preciousness of human life and the right of individuals to determine what is done to their own bodies" as stated in Calif. Health and Safety Code S. 24,171".

**Full text of the article can be found here:**

[http://www.californiaprogressreport.com/2008/05/a\\_new\\_strategy.html](http://www.californiaprogressreport.com/2008/05/a_new_strategy.html)

**And the CDFa response can be found here:**

[http://www.californiaprogressreport.com/2008/05/california\\_sec\\_6.html](http://www.californiaprogressreport.com/2008/05/california_sec_6.html)

**About Stop The Spray**

**Stop The Spray** ([www.stopthespray.org](http://www.stopthespray.org)) is a grass-roots movement that first started in October of 2007, as a public response to massive aerial sprayings of thousands of people on the Monterey Peninsula. The focus of the movement is on the people's right to information and the demand for their consent prior to any spraying program that directly exposes their bodies to toxins. As of May 13, 2008 the petition started by **Stop The Spray** has been signed by 26,806 people. **Stop The Spray** has organizations throughout the entire Bay Area, East Bay and Marin.

**StopTheSpray.org** is currently evaluating ballot initiatives and other measures necessary to curtail the power of the Department of Food and Agriculture to endanger the health and human rights of people in California.

To view or sign the online petition opposing pesticide spraying without consent and to read more about the issue please visit: [www.stopthespray.org](http://www.stopthespray.org)

**Proposed Legislation**

AB 2763 (Laird - D) Requires the Department of Food and Agriculture to create a list of invasive animals, plants, and insects that have a reasonable likelihood of entering California for which an eradication program might be appropriate, and hold public hearings on this information.

AB 2765 (Huffman - D) sets new limits on the emergency powers of the Department of Agriculture. The bill requires a public hearing to receive testimony and examine alternatives to aerial spraying prior to any decision to spray.

AB 2760 (Leno - D) would require that an Environmental Impact Report be completed before the CDFa can apply pesticide in an urban area for the eradication of the light brown apple moth.

**About Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM)**

The Light-brown Apple Moth (LBAM) was officially discovered in California in 2007 although it may have been in residence in the state for up to 30 years. The CDFa declared an administrative emergency, established quarantine zones and launched a multi-million dollar eradication program. The eradication program, which includes residential and urban areas, is at least in part motivated by international trade issues. Of particular concern is that the chemicals used have never been tested for use on humans and have never before been applied on such a large scale and over human populations. Long-term effects on human health and the environment are unknown and highly controversial, and over 640 health complaints have been identified. The CDFa aerial spray campaign is scheduled to resume and expand into the larger Bay Area in the summer of 2008 with monthly applications until the total eradication of the moth –deemed impossible by most experts –until at least 2010.