



The LBAM Pesticide Spray Program Questions And Answers (July 2008)

1. Is the aerial spray stopped?

Not completely. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) announced on June 19, 2008, that it did not plan to aerially spray urban areas at the present time. CDFA still plans to spray "forested" and "agricultural" areas for LBAM. CDFA has not identified where those areas are. We do not know, for example, whether places like Mt. Tamalpais, the Marin Headlands, or West Marin are included in these categories.

2. Are any pesticide treatments still planned for cities?

Yes. CDFA plans ground spray in cities as well as treatments such as "splattering" goo onto telephone poles and trees to attract and kill LBAM. The "goo" will contain a dangerous pesticide, permethrin—a carcinogen, a neurotoxin, and very toxic to bees. The ground program would be repeated many times per year, for years.

3. Does the state plan to complete an environmental review before proceeding?

The state has not answered this question, but on June 18, one day before announcing they were halting the aerial spray over cities, the state filed a notice of intent to appeal the Monterey and Santa Cruz counties court decisions that bar the state from continuing the spray in those counties until an environmental impact report is completed. Appealing those decisions would signify that CDFA still seeks to continue the LBAM program without any environmental review.

4. Has the state investigated the health and environmental damage reported after the Monterey and Santa Cruz LBAM spray in 2007?

Not adequately. The state issued a report in April that studied fewer than 10% of the 643 health complaints that were filed and concluded that it was not possible to determine whether the health complaints were linked to the spray. This report has been repeatedly misrepresented by state officials as showing "no link" between the spray and the illnesses. Investigators who prepared the report did not contact any of the individuals or physicians who reported illnesses. For spraying in 2008, the state's plan for individuals to report illness is to call the state Poison Control Center hotline.

5. What about those toxicology tests the governor ordered when he delayed the spray this spring?

The "six-pack" toxicology tests are acute tests of very short-term exposure and do not test for the ongoing exposure to a time-released pesticide sprayed every 30 to 90 days. These tests tell us nothing about the exposure people in LBAM spray zones will experience, nor do they address the long-term health effects such as cancer that may result from pesticide exposure. The results of the tests have not been released, and it is not clear whether the state was testing the whole formulas of the four pesticides that were being considered for us in 2008 or just the "active" synthetic pheromone ingredient, which makes up a small percentage of each pesticide.

6. Where does this leave us?

- Celebrating the victory achieved of informed citizens who stopped the aerial spray over cities within six months of the state's announcement that the spray would expand to the Bay Area.
- Opposing the LBAM program as still unnecessary and unjustified. After more than a year of controversy over this program, the state has not produced any evidence that LBAM will harm state crops or native plants, and each of the state's claims (e.g., about how long the moth has been here, the number of plants that might be harmed, etc.) has been shown by factual and scientific evidence to be false. An important step should be to reclassify LBAM as no longer a quarantinable pest, which would eliminate the justification for the whole treatment program in California.
- Seeking written clarification of exactly what the state intends to do, where, and when. Attorneys for Bay Area cities and environmental and community groups—including Stop the Spray Marin—have written the state requesting written clarification of what the state's plans are and whether an environmental review will be done before the LBAM program continues.
- Opposing the US LBAM quarantine as unfair to CA farmers. Produce is being imported from New Zealand, where LBAM is established, that CA farmers would not be allowed to ship. CA farmers are subject to regular inspections that prevent them from working and in some cases damage their crops so that the produce is unsaleable.
- Recognizing that the LBAM program is a symbol of a larger problem. Large-scale agriculture, which dominates the production of our food supply, and the state and federal bureaucracies that regulate agriculture, are focused on the wrong things. Spending millions of dollars for dangerous chemical interventions for invasive species is not good for the health of the planet or for those who grow and consume our food. The emphasis should be on reforming agriculture to grow in harmony with nature, without the use of chemicals and other industrial interventions such as genetically modified plants. The next pests for which the state wants to spray are already in the news—Japanese beetles in Merced, citrus psyllid at the California-Mexico border. LBAM will not be the last pest the state wants to “treat” with chemicals, as they treat us and our food supply in the process.

6. What can we do?

- Write to your state legislators urging a withdrawal of funding for the LBAM program and a gradual move to all-organic agriculture throughout California.
- Write to your federal legislators asking that LBAM be reclassified as a no longer quarantinable pest, and that USDA's mission be refocused on supporting organic agriculture and on eliminating unnecessary use of toxic chemicals.
- Vote with your food dollars: Buy organic directly from farmers, join a local organic CSA (community supported agriculture program), plant organic vegetables in your backyard, support local resolutions and state ballot initiatives that may be launched in the next few months.
- Stay informed with the Stop the Spray Marin newsletter and Upcoming Events notices. Contact stopthespraymarin.org to sign up.
- Volunteer to help Stop the Spray Marin as we continue to work to stop the LBAM program, so you can receive updates regarding where volunteer help is needed. Contact: volunteer@stopthespraymarin.org.
- See also stopthespray.org, lbamspray.com, cassonline.org, veganreader.org, cdfa@ca.gov.

STOP THE SPRAY MARIN

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