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# **Oriental Fruit Fly Cooperative Eradication Program**

**La Verne, Los Angeles County,  
California**

**Environmental Assessment  
July 2009**

# Oriental Fruit Fly Cooperative Eradication Program

## La Verne, Los Angeles County, California

### Environmental Assessment July 2009

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**CAUTION:** Pesticides can be injurious to humans, domestic animals, desirable plants, and fish or other wildlife—if they are not handled or applied properly. Use all pesticides selectively and carefully. Follow recommended practices for the disposal of surplus pesticides and pesticide containers.

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## **Appendix A. Eradication Zone, Oriental Fruit Fly Cooperative Eradication Program**

# I. Need for the Proposal

The oriental fruit fly, *Bactrocera dorsalis* (Hendel) (synonym = *Dacus dorsalis* Hendel), is a destructive agricultural pest in many parts of the world. It has a long history of being a serious pest of tropical and subtropical fruits in Southwest Asia and most of the Pacific Islands. Following introduction into the Hawaiian Islands in the 1940s, this fly multiplied rapidly, and currently is known to infest more than 125 different host fruits in the State of Hawaii. Worldwide, over 250 different fruits and vegetables are attacked. The oriental fruit fly (OFF) has been recorded to infest more than 250 kinds of fruits and vegetables including citrus, guava, mango, papaya, avocado, banana, loquat, tomato, surinam cherry, rose apple, passion fruit, persimmon, pineapple, peach, pear, apricot, fig, and coffee berries.

OFF has been identified and eradicated numerous times in the continental United States since it was first found in California in 1960. Reintroduction has occurred as a result of infected fruits and vegetables brought across the border without inspection. Because of the species' rapid population growth and potential for damage, a prompt response is needed to contain and eradicate any infestation found in the conterminous United States.

From July 15 through July 23, 2009, one adult mated female and four adult male OFF were detected on three different residential properties in the La Verne area of Los Angeles County, California. The host trees in which the detection traps were placed were orange and apricot trees (Burnett, 2009). The finding of the mated female triggered Federal involvement in the eradication of OFF in La Verne, California. APHIS is proposing to cooperate with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the Los Angeles County Department of Agriculture in a regulatory and eradication program to prevent the spread of OFF to noninfested areas of the United States. It should be noted that the OFF treatment area coincides with the eradication zone for the white striped fruit fly in Los Angeles County, which is undergoing a concurrent Federal eradication program (USDA, 2009).

APHIS' authority for cooperation in the program is based upon the Plant Protection Act (7 United States Code (U.S.C.) 7701 et seq.) which authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out operations to eradicate insect pests, and to use emergency measures to prevent dissemination of plant pests new to or not widely distributed throughout the United States. The program proposes to eradicate and prevent the spread of OFF through quarantine and male annihilation using bait stations.

This site-specific environmental assessment (EA) analyzes alternatives for the eradication efforts of OFF and is tiered to the Fruit Fly Cooperative Control Program, Final Environmental Impact Statement—2001 (FF Cooperative Control Program EIS)(USDA, 2001).

This EA has been prepared consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and APHIS' NEPA implementing procedures (7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 372) for the purpose of evaluating how the proposed action, if implemented, may affect the quality of the human environment.

## **II. Alternatives**

APHIS considered two alternatives in response to the need to eradicate and contain infestations of OFF: (1) no action, and (2) eradication (preferred alternative). Both alternatives are described briefly in this section.

### **A. No Action**

The no action alternative would involve no Federal regulatory effort to restrict the spread of OFF or facilitate (certify) the commercial movement of OFF host materials and other regulated articles. In the absence of a Federal effort, quarantine and control would be left to State government, grower groups, and individuals. Expansion of the infestation would be influenced by any controls exerted over it, by the proximity of host plants, and by climatic conditions.

### **B. Eradication (Preferred Alternative)**

Eradication is the preferred alternative. Multiple options for eradication of OFF infestations are analyzed in the Fruit Fly Cooperative Control Program EIS (USDA, 2001). These options include (1) male annihilation using bait stations, (2) supplemental ground spray, (3) soil drenches, (4) aerial bait spray, (5) mass trapping, (6) biological control, and (7) host removal.

The eradication area includes portions of Los Angeles County which fall within a 9-mile area around each property on which an adult fly has been trapped. Delimitation traps are placed throughout the area to delimit the infestation and to monitor

posttreatment fly populations. Jackson<sup>1</sup> traps and McPhail<sup>2</sup> traps are placed at a density of 25 per square mile in the core areas; the Jackson traps are placed at 5 per square mile in the remaining delimitation area. These traps are monitored on a regular schedule for a period equal to three fly generations beyond the date of the last fly find.

Male annihilation technique (MAT) will be used as the primary population control treatment. MAT makes use of small amounts of an attractant (methyl eugenol), a pesticide (naled), and a thickening agent (Min-U-Gel®) to lure the male flies of a population to bait stations. The flies are killed when they feed at the bait stations. The naled/lure mixture described above is applied to utility poles, street trees, and other unpainted surfaces (such as fences) using pressurized tree marking guns at a density of 600 bait stations per square mile (Burnett, 2009).

If larvae or mated females are found on the property, the foliage of host plants on the infested and adjacent properties will be treated with protein bait spray. Foliar sprays may be extended up to a 200-meter radius if trap catches warrant it. Fruit stripping will occur to host plants on property within a 100 meter radius around all known larval infestations and occur to host plants on adjacent properties.

A quarantine boundary will also be established to ensure that any host material that leaves the quarantine area is free of OFF. Host material may be treated by cold treatment, vapor heat treatment, irradiation, or fumigation with methyl bromide (USDA, 2001).

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<sup>1</sup> The delta-shaped Jackson trap is made of plastic coated cardboard. Lure is placed on a cotton roll wick that is supported inside the trap by a wire wick holder, or a plug dispenser is placed in a dispenser holder that is supported by the hanger. A sticky insert on the bottom captures flies. The trap consists of the trap body, insert, and trap hanger. In addition, either a dispenser holder and plug dispenser or a wick holder and wick are used to hold the lure. Trap hangers and dispenser holders are reusable and should be saved.

Source: USDA-APHIS, *Mediterranean Fruit Fly Action Plan* (November, 2003); this can be found at [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/plants/manuals/emergency/downloads/medfly\\_action\\_plan.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/manuals/emergency/downloads/medfly_action_plan.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> The McPhail trap is a glass trap with a water reservoir. Flies enter from below through the opening and drown in the solution. The trap is baited by filling the reservoir with water, Torula yeast, and borax pellets.

Source: USDA-APHIS, *Mediterranean Fruit Fly Action Plan* (November, 2003); this can be found at [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/plants/manuals/emergency/downloads/medfly\\_action\\_plan.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/manuals/emergency/downloads/medfly_action_plan.pdf).

### **III. Environmental Effects**

The potential environmental consequences of each of the alternatives (1) no action and (2) eradication (the preferred alternative) will be examined below. The potential impacts have been analyzed in comprehensive fashion in the the FF Cooperative Control Program EIS (USDA, 2001); the findings are hereby incorporated by reference.

#### **A. No Action**

Under the no action alternative, APHIS would not provide any financial or other assistance to CDFA or the Los Angeles County Department of Agriculture. If CDFA and the Los Angeles County Department of Agriculture are not able to eradicate OFF from La Verne, California, it is likely that the fruit fly would become established and spread into the agricultural production areas of California. Important California crops that could be infested include pome and stone fruits, citrus, dates, avocados, and certain vegetables, particularly tomatoes and peppers. Damage occurs when the female lays eggs in the fruit. These eggs hatch into larvae or maggots, which tunnel through the flesh of the fruit, thus making it unfit for consumption.

In addition to the damage to fruits and vegetables, there may also be measures imposed on California OFF host material that is exported to other countries. This host material may require other treatments and/or the amount of host material to be exported could be limited.

A great number of crops in California are threatened by the introduction of OFF including pears, plums, cherries, peaches, apricots, figs, citrus, tomatoes, and avocados. It is estimated that the cost of not eradicating OFF in California would range from \$44 million to \$176 million in crop losses, additional pesticide use, and quarantine requirements.

#### **B. Eradication (Preferred Alternative)**

The environmental impacts of the proposed action, which include quarantine and the use of delimitating traps, are expected to be minimal. Potential impacts associated with quarantine action have been analyzed in the FF Cooperative Control Program EIS (USDA, 2001), and are hereby incorporated by reference.

As mentioned above, the quarantine activities include restriction from interstate movement with the potential use of cold treatment, vapor heat treatment, irradiation, or fumigation with methyl bromide (USDA, 2001). The site-specific characteristics of the program area were considered with respect to their potential to alter or influence the anticipated effects on

human health, wildlife, and environmental quality. No significant cumulative impacts are expected as a consequence of the proposed program or its component treatment methods.

The proposed action, eradication, includes the use of male annihilation stations which were analyzed in the FF Cooperative Control Program EIS (USDA, 2001). Use of spinosad in the male annihilation stations was not evaluated in the that document. However, the concentration of spinosad in male annihilation stations is low and placement of stations limits exposure to humans and nontarget species. The use of spinosad was proposed to reduce the use of organophosphate insecticides, and is expected to have less environmental impact than malathion or naled (USDA, 2001). An efficacy study was conducted and published by Vargas et. al. (2008) which concludes that use of spinosad was as effective as the most popular organophosphate insecticides that are commonly used for male annihilation including naled, malathion, 2,2-dichlorovinyl dimethyl phosphate.

Detections of OFF have been made in residential communities of La Verne, California. The City of La Verne has a population of over 33,000 and lies to the east of the City of Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean. La Verne occupies portions of the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys and foothills. Land uses are primarily residential and industrial/commercial, with some parkland, agricultural, and undeveloped areas. The elevation of the area ranges from 950 to 1,700 feet, annual rainfall totals 15 to 17 inches, and temperatures average 63 to 68 °F. (See appendix A for a map of the location of the original detection sites and the current treatment area boundaries.)

The treatment area includes parts of Big Dalton Wilderness Park and Marshall Canyon Regional Park on the north side of the treatment area. The use of male annihilation stations precludes impacts to these sites and to the Angeles National Forest. The San Antonio Reservoir is on the northeast edge of the eradication zone. Puddingstone Reservoir is within the treatment area, southwest of La Verne. The use of site-specific buffers and mitigation measures around these water bodies and sensitive areas are designed to preclude contamination and adverse impact. Chino Hills State Park is south of the treatment area and unlikely to be affected unless the infestation of OFF should spread.

The site-specific characteristics of the program area were considered with respect to their potential to alter or influence the anticipated effects on human health, wildlife, and environmental quality. The following issues were identified and analyzed for this specific program:

- (1) potential effects on human health from chemical pesticide applications,
- (2) potential effects on wildlife (including endangered and threatened species) from program activities and treatments, and
- (3) potential effects on environmental quality.

The use of fruit fly male annihilation spot treatments is unlikely to pose any substantial risks in the present treatment area. The use of site-specific buffers may be needed to avoid drift and minimize contamination of water bodies within the treatment area if the program should require bait spray applications. Standard program operational procedures and mitigative measures will be employed to avoid adverse impacts to these areas.

Similar OFF eradication programs have been implemented successfully in the past by APHIS and cooperating agencies. Potential environmental impacts from these programs have been analyzed thoroughly in previous EAs, such as Oriental Fruit Fly Cooperative Eradication Program, Lakewood, Los Angeles County, California—Environmental Assessment, August 2008 (USDA, 2008); Oriental Fruit Fly Cooperative Eradication Program, Rialto, San Bernardino County, California—Environmental Assessment, October 2006 (USDA, 2006); and Oriental Fruit Fly Cooperative Eradication Program, Westchester Area, Los Angeles County, California—Environmental Assessment, September 2004 (USDA, 2004).

## **1. Human Health**

The potential effect on human health was considered with respect to the program use of the chemical pesticides malathion bait, spinosad bait, diazinon (a soil drench), naled lure (spot treatments), spinosad lure (spot treatments), and methyl bromide (a fumigant). Three major factors influence human health risk associated with use of pesticide formulations:

- fate in the environment,
- toxicity to humans, and
- exposure to humans.

Each of the program pesticides is known to be toxic to humans. Exposure to program pesticides can vary, depending upon the pesticide and the use pattern. Potential exposure is low for all applications except malathion and spinosad bait. Program use of malathion and spinosad bait is limited to regulatory and eradication treatments; such applications are applied only to commercial groves and residential locations that are close to larval sites. The analyses and data found in the FF Cooperative Control Program EIS and the human health risk assessment indicate that exposures to pesticides from normal program operations are not likely to result in substantial adverse human health effects (USDA, 2001; USDA, 1999; USDA, 1998a). (Refer to the FF Cooperative Control Program EIS, the

human health risk assessment, and their supporting documents for more detailed information relative to human health risk.)

The alternatives were compared with respect to their potential to affect human health. In general, a well-coordinated eradication program using integrated pest management (IPM) technologies would result in the least use of chemical pesticides overall and the least potential to adversely affect human health.

Some executive orders, such as Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks," and Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations," as well as departmental or agency directives call for special environmental reviews in certain circumstances. No circumstance that would trigger the need for special environmental reviews is involved in implementing the preferred alternative considered in this document.

## **2. Nontarget Species**

Potential effects on nontarget species (including endangered and threatened species) were also considered with respect to the use of program pesticides. Paralleling human health risk, the risk to nontarget species is related to the fate of the pesticides in the environment, toxicity to the nontarget species, and exposure to nontarget species. All of the pesticides are highly toxic to invertebrates, although the likelihood of exposure (and, thus, impact) varies a great deal from pesticide to pesticide and with the use pattern (USDA, 2003; USDA, 2001; USDA, 1998b). In general, a well-coordinated eradication program using IPM technologies would result in the least use of chemical pesticides overall, with minimal adverse impact to nontarget species.

The treatment area was considered with respect to any special characteristics that would tend to influence the effects of program operations. Potentially sensitive areas have been identified, considered, and accommodated through special selection of control methods and use of specific mitigation measures. The treatment area contains no special characteristics that would require a departure from the standard operating procedures and mitigation measures that were described in the programmatic EIS.

In compliance with section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, APHIS reviewed the eradication zone boundaries to determine if any federally threatened or endangered species or critical habitat co-occur within the treatment area. APHIS has consulted with the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service to develop avoidance measures for listed species within the treatment area identified in appendix A. To avoid potential impacts to aquatic listed resources, no

program treatments will occur within 100 feet of any water body. In addition, limiting the application of program pesticides to host plants will preclude impacts to other listed species.

In the event of future fruit fly detections or the need to expand the eradication boundaries considered herein, APHIS will repeat its review of that action to determine if the potential exists to affect federally listed resources, and will consult with the appropriate agency, as necessary.

### **3. Environmental Quality**

Environmental quality was considered with respect to the preservation of clean air, pure water, and a pollution-free environment. Pesticide use is the primary concern of the public and the program in regards to preserving environmental quality. Although program pesticide use is limited, especially in comparison to other agricultural pesticide use, the proposed action would result in a controlled release of chemicals into the environment. The fate of those chemicals varies with respect to the environmental component (air, water, or other substrate) and its characteristics (temperature, pH, dilution, etc.). The half-life of malathion in soil or on foliage ranges from 1 to 6 days; in water, from 6 to 18 days. The half-life of spinosad ranges from 8 to 15 days; in water, residues persist for only a few hours. The half-life of diazinon in soil ranges from 1.5 to 10 weeks; in water at neutral pH, from 8 to 9 days. The half-life of naled on foliage ranges from 2.3 to 2.5 days. The half-life of methyl bromide is 3 to 7 days; however, the small quantities used disperse when fumigation chambers are vented. (See the FF Cooperative Control Program EIS for a more detailed consideration of the environmental fates of pesticides.)

Risk to environmental quality is considered minimal. The proposed program area was examined to identify characteristics that would tend to influence the effects of program operations. Allowances will be made for any special site-specific characteristics that would require a departure from the standard operating procedures.

It should be noted that the OFF treatment area coincides with the eradication zone for the white striped fruit fly in Los Angeles County, which is undergoing a concurrent Federal eradication program (USDA, 2009). The contained nature of the primary eradication tool (male annihilation) of each of these programs makes it unlikely that contamination or exposure to more than one attractant or more than one pesticide would occur with sufficient frequency to result in measurable effects. The placement of male annihilation treatments is outside the reach of individuals and at locations where contamination of water or natural substrates is unlikely. Cumulative impacts are not anticipated.

In summary, there would be limited impact to human health, nontarget species, and the environment resulting from selection of the preferred alternative, eradication. Currently, eradication technology involves the use of male annihilation stations as the primary tool for eradication. Additional treatments may be implemented in this program, including protein bait spray, foliar sprays, and quarantine treatments, as discussed previously. Use of these treatments results in minimal adverse impacts to nontarget species as determined in the FF Cooperative Control Program EIS (USDA, 2001) and nontarget species risk assessments (USDA, 2003; USDA, 1998a). Risk to environmental quality is considered to be minimal.

## IV. References Cited

Burnett, W., 2009. Situation report OFF CA—Los Angeles Co., La Verne July 23, 2009. USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Riverdale, MD.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service 2009. White striped fruit fly cooperative eradication program, Los Angeles County, California—environmental assessment, July 2009. USDA, APHIS, Riverdale, MD

Vargas, Roger I., John D. Stark, Mark Hertlein, Agenor Mafra Neot, Reginald Coler, and Jaime C. Pinero, 2008. Evaluation of SPLAT with spinosad and methyl eugenol or cue-lure for “attract and kill” of oriental and melon fruit flies (Diptera: Tephritidae) in Hawaii. *J. Econ Entomol.* 101 (3): 759–768.

## **V. Listing of Agencies Consulted**

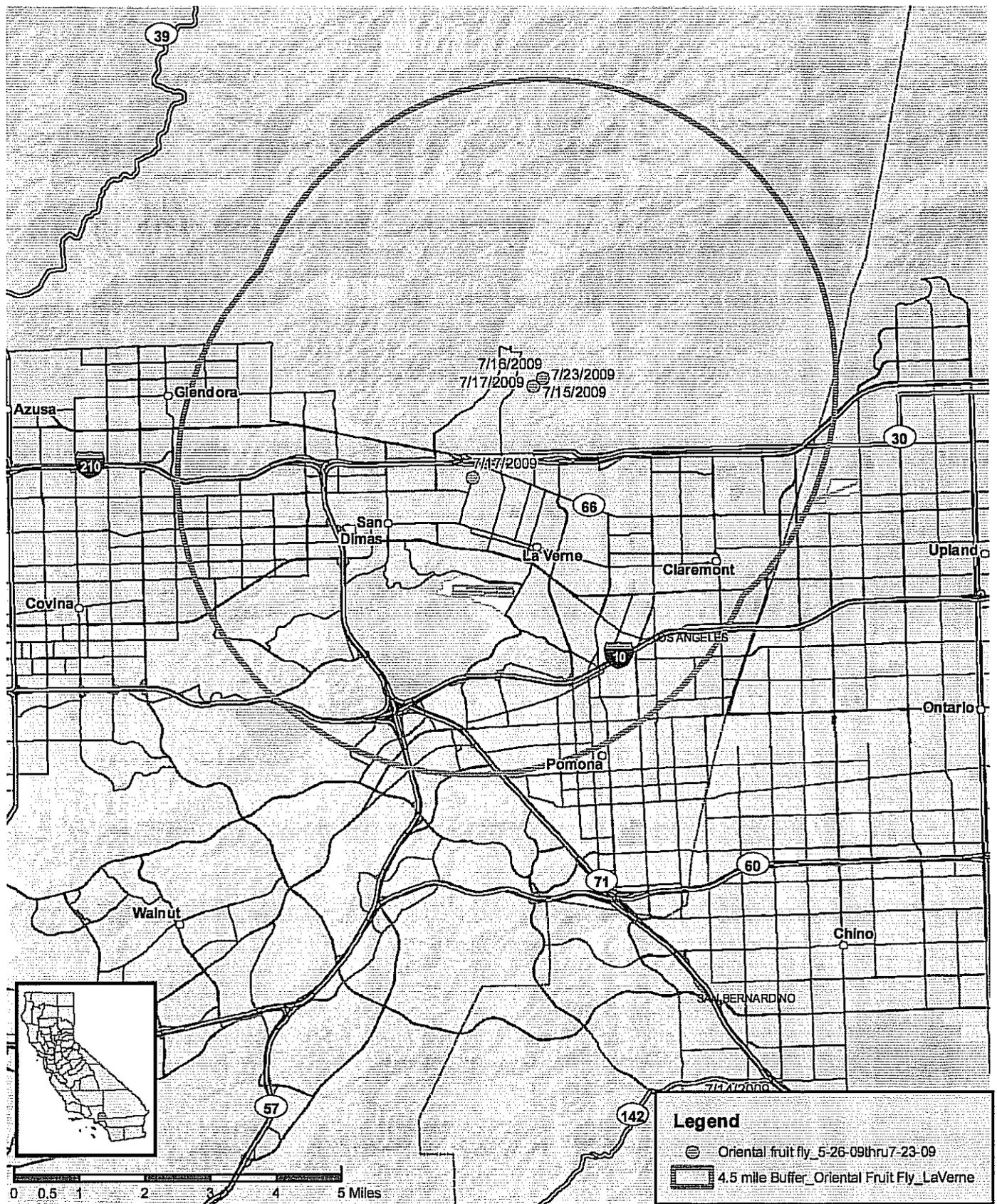
California Department of Food and Agriculture  
Department of Plant Industry  
Sacramento, California

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Plant Protection and Quarantine  
Fruit Fly Exclusion and Detection Program  
4700 River Road, Unit 137  
Riverdale, MD 20737-1234

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Policy and Program Development  
Environmental Services  
4700 River Road, Unit 149  
Riverdale, MD 20737-1238

**Appendix A. Eradication Zone, Oriental Fruit Fly  
Cooperative Eradication Program**

# Oriental Fruit Fly collected July, 2009 La Verne, Los Angeles County, California



**Legend**

- ⊙ Oriental fruit fly\_5-26-09thru7-23-09
- 4.5 mile Buffer\_Oriental Fruit Fly\_LaVerne



**Finding of No Significant Impact  
for  
Oriental Fruit Fly Cooperative Eradication Program  
La Verne, Los Angeles County, California  
Environmental Assessment  
July 2009**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzed alternatives for eradication of the oriental fruit fly, an exotic agricultural pest that has been found in areas of Los Angeles County, California. The EA, incorporated by reference in this document, is available from—

USDA, APHIS, PPQ  
State Plant Health Director  
650 Capital Mall, Suite 6-400  
Sacramento, CA 95814

or

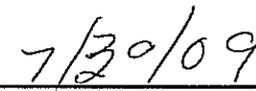
USDA, APHIS, PPQ  
Fruit Fly Exclusion and Detection Program  
4700 River Road, Unit 137  
Riverdale, MD 20737-1234

The EA for this program analyzed the alternatives of (1) no action, and (2) eradication and quarantine only (preferred alternative). APHIS selected eradication using an integrated pest management approach for the proposed program because of its ability to achieve eradication in a way that also reduces the magnitude of potential environmental consequences.

APHIS has determined that this program will have no effect on threatened and endangered species or critical habitat based on its review of proposed program operations, and on informal consultation with the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service's Carlsbad Field Office. In the event of future detections outside the existing treatment areas, APHIS will reinstate consultation to ensure impacts to listed species are avoided.

I find that implementation of the proposed program will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. I have considered and based my finding of no significant impact on the quantitative and qualitative risk assessments of the proposed pesticides, and on my review of the program's operational characteristics. In addition, I find that the environmental process undertaken for this program is entirely consistent with the principles of environmental justice, as expressed in Executive Order 12898, and the protection of children, as expressed in Executive Order 13045. Lastly, because I have not found evidence of significant environmental impact associated with this proposed program, I further find that an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared and that the program may proceed.

  
Helene Wright  
State Plant Health Director, California  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Sacramento, CA

  
Date