

California: Bay Area Population to be Sprayed with New Unregistered Pesticide

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The people of the Bay area of California are about to be sprayed with a new pesticide not registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in a pre-emptive strike against a perceived threat from the Light Brown Apple Moth.

"In August, the California Department of Food and Agriculture plans to spray pesticides in five Bay Area counties for the invasive species" (CBS 5, 2008). One of the chemicals being used is Checkmate, manufactured by Suterra, LLC, which is owned by Stewart Resnick, one of the richest men in California, and owner of the largest farming operation of tree crops in the world. Mr. Resnick is also included in California Governor Schwarzenegger's top 100 donors. (Arnold Watch, 2008)

*Mr. Resnick has developed and owns a number of successful companies including Paramount Agribusiness, the largest farming operation of tree crops in the world, which includes Paramount Citrus, Paramount Farming and Paramount Farms, growers, processors and marketers of citrus, almonds and pistachios; POM Wonderful, grower of pomegranates and maker of the all-natural POM Wonderful pomegranate juice; Teleflora, the largest floral wire service in the world; FIJI Water, the second largest imported bottled water in the United States and the newest member of the Roll family of companies; The Franklin Mint, a leader in high-quality collectibles; and **Suterra, the largest biorational pest control company in the United States.** (Political Friendster, 2006)*

The pesticide used to spray Santa Cruz, CA last year was the same product, but without a new active ingredient. The new and improved Checkmate contains two active ingredients. It is this new version that will be used on Bay Area residents. The new version of the pesticide contains an active ingredient that has not been approved by the EPA. The picture below shows the original ingredient, (E)-11-tetradecen-1-yl acetate, which was in the original product, and the second ingredient, (E,E)-9,11-tetradecadien-1-yl acetate, which was not, and is the ingredient currently under exemption from EPA registration.



(C&EN, 2007)

Tests have been conducted with the original version of Checkmate, but not on such a large scale.

It is the second active ingredient, (E,E)-9,11-tetradecadien-1-yl acetate, that is the wild card. The EPA has not approved this new ingredient! In fact, the EPA has granted an exemption just for the Bay Area spraying and waived the public comment period due to the

“emergency situation.” The following is taken from the EPA site:

*SUMMARY: EPA has received a quarantine exemption request from the United States Department of Agriculture/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS) to use the pesticide (E,E)-9,11-tetradecadien-1-yl acetate (CAS No. 30562-09-5) to treat host plants to control the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM). **The Applicant proposes the use of a new chemical which has not been registered by EPA.** Due to the unique nature of this emergency situation, in which the time to review the conditions of this situation was short, it was not possible to issue a solicitation for public comment, in accordance with 40 CFR 166.24, prior to the Agency’s decision to grant these exemptions.*

*DATES: **EPA is waiving the public comment period**, as allowed in 40 CFR 166.24, due to the short period of time available with which to review this situation and render a timely decision. However, comments may still be submitted and will be evaluated. (EPA, 2007)*

This exemption is dated July 2007. The spraying is to begin in August 2008, over a year after the exemption was granted. “Because of that exemption, the spraying program isn’t subject to state approval, according to representatives of the state Department of Pesticide Regulation” (Kay, 2008).

Just what is this emergency situation? Some say that it is no emergency at all. According to botanist Daniel Harder, Executive Director of the Arboretum at UC Santa Cruz, “It’s not such a nasty pest. You’re not going to see a plant succumbing to the Light Brown Apple Moth.” The bug is considered a minor pest in New Zealand, where it arrived from Australia, they say. (Kay, 2008)

No eradication measures have been taken against the moth in New Zealand, and none are planned. The moth is a minor pest whose larvae are eaten by earwigs, birds, and spiders. Furthermore, “there is no widespread infestation of the light brown apple moth [in the U.S.], but U.S. Department of Agriculture officials say they are trying to head off a potential disaster” (Kay, 2008). Therefore, Bay Area residents will be sprayed with an untested unregulated pesticide on the pretense of this non-existent emergency by Stewart Resnick, owner of the largest farming operation of tree crops in the world, and one of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s top 100 contributors, and are basically told to just shut up and take it.

Cities to be sprayed are as follows:

Alameda County:

Albany
Alameda
Piedmont
Emeryville
Oakland

Contra Costa County:

El Cerrito
El Sobrante
Hercules
Kensington
Pinole-N. Richmond
San Pablo

San Francisco County:

San Francisco

San Mateo County:

Daly City
Colma
Pacifica
San Bruno
South San Francisco

Marin County:

Tiburon
Belvedere
San Pablo
Corte Madera
Larkspur
Sausalito

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