

FOR INFORMATION  
DA-2008-43  
August 7, 2008

SUBJECT: Confirmed the Identification of a Single Male False Codling Moth, *Thaumatotibia leucotreta*, in Ventura County, California

To: State Plant Health Directors and State Plant Regulatory Officials

On July 30, 2008, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) confirmed the identification of a single male false codling moth, *Thaumatotibia leucotreta*, in Ventura County, California. This is the first domestic detection of this significant agricultural pest in the United States. There is no evidence of a reproducing population associated with this single detection.

This single adult male specimen was trapped in a suburban area of Port Hueneme in Ventura County. The trap was placed in a pine tree near an orange tree. Port Hueneme is a small, deep-water seaport in Central California that supports a high level of agricultural import and export traffic, especially dealing in shipments of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The specimen was initially identified as false codling moth by a taxonomist with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). Final confirmation of the identification of false codling moth was made at the Systematic Entomology Laboratory of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

A delimitation trap array was immediately put in place over a two and one half mile radius surrounding this detection site with 100 traps in the core square mile, 50 traps per square mile in the first buffer and 25 traps per square mile in the second buffer. The traps in the core square mile were checked daily and traps in the first buffer were checked every two days, for the first week. Traps in the second buffer have been inspected at least once. There have been no additional moths detected. All traps are now on a weekly inspection schedule.

The false codling moth is native to Africa and attacks a wide range of wild and cultivated host plants there. It is a pest of economic importance to many crops grown in Africa, including avocado, citrus, corn, cotton, macadamia, peach, and plum. Other hosts of this pest include castor bean, guava, mango, peppers, pineapple, oak, okra, olive, and tea.

This false codling moth detection is considered transient, actionable, and under surveillance. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) continues to work with CDFA and Ventura County's Agricultural Commissioner's office in implementing the delimiting survey to determine the scope of this potentially

significant situation. A second detection of false codling moth within six square miles of the initial detection, during the same life-cycle, will result in the establishment of a quarantine area for this pest. If such a quarantine area is established, then APHIS will issue a press release and send out a notice to our trading partners.

For more information about APHIS' response to this false codling moth detection, you may contact Senior Staff Officer Deborah McPartlan at (301) 734-5356 or Regional Program Manager Dr. Shaharra Usnick at (970) 494-7571.

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