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WASHINGTON, March 22, 2007--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today confirmed the presence of light brown apple moth (LBAM), *Epiphyas postvittana*, from specimens collected in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, Calif., by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).

Diagnosticians at USDA's Systematic Entomology Laboratory in Washington, D.C., determined the samples were positive and validated using morphological testing.

APHIS, in conjunction with CDFA, has initiated trapping activities for this insect in areas surrounding the initial detection, including parts of Alameda and Contra Costa counties. APHIS and CDFA have also assembled a technical working group comprised of international experts on LBAM to discuss survey and control strategies to safeguard against this potentially damaging pest and prevent its further spread.

LBAM is native to Australia and is found in New Zealand, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Hawaii. The host range for LBAM is broad with more than 250 plant species known to be susceptible to attack by this pest. Major domestic hosts of concern are stone fruit (peaches, plums, nectarines and apricots), pip fruit (apples and pears), grapes, cherries and citrus.

The pest destroys, stunts or deforms young seedlings; spoils the appearance of ornamental plants; and injures deciduous fruit-tree crops, citrus and grapes.

LBAM has the potential to cause significant economic losses due to increased production costs and the possible loss of international and domestic markets. However, these impacts can be effectively mitigated through production-level management practices. State and federal officials are working together to take appropriate regulatory action to prevent the spread of this pest in association with the movement of host commodities.

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