



California Alliance to Stop the Spray - CASS

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Spraying Toxic to Local Economies

Tourism and real estate would be major victims of aerial spraying in nine Northern California counties for the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM), losing from \$200 million to \$2 billion, far larger than the US Department of agriculture's projected crop losses for all California growers.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg. In addition to all figures in the report, a ripple effect reduces tax income and sales for businesses patronized by workers in all these areas for up to 10 years. All figures are based on a 1 percent to 10 percent drop in revenues. These calculations are just part of a report released today by the California Alliance to Stop the Spray (CASS) on economic costs and human rights violations by the LBAM project. Foster Gamble, a business executive, led the team that produced the report. Above all, we are concerned about people's health, but we are also concerned about how the aerial spraying will impact people's financial well being, Gamble said. If tourism drops off just 1 percent, there would be a loss of \$198 million a year. Already, there is chat on a premier travel site recommending avoiding these areas if the spray resumes.

In real estate, property values could plummet further in an already weakened market, as fewer people would want to move to neighborhoods being continually sprayed with pesticides. If property values dropped just 1 percent, Gamble said, property owners would lose a staggering \$25.7 billion in equity. Already, the Marin Association of Realtors has changed disclosure forms because some attorneys believe disclosure is wise to ward off potential lawsuits. Part of this wording is: Buyer is advised to consult with environmental health specialists and physicians for further information regarding pesticide spraying. The CASS Economic Impacts and Solutions report projects a spray-related loss to real estate agents Commissions of \$17.8 million.

Gamble and his team warn that organic farmers are also going to be hit hard if this program continues. Shoppers want to know if the produce has been sprayed, not if the USDA says it still qualifies as organic, says Gamble. Our report projects that organic farms could lose between \$2.8 and \$28.8 million annually in Santa Cruz County and Monterey County alone.

That's just 1 to 10 percent, a conservative estimates compared with the spinach E coli contamination in 2006, which dropped local farmers revenues by 28 percent. To date, the LBAM has caused no crop damage in California. That lack of crop damage was part of the basis for a Santa Cruz County Superior Court? judge halting the spraying until the state could complete an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Along with economic analysis and related topics, the CASS report finds faults with the agricultural agencies figures. The state's estimates of damage, the report explains, are based on outdated calculations related to Australian losses before they got rid of old fashioned pesticides that killed LBAM predators. The state's calculations also include costs of research and chemical treatments as if they were damage to crops. The report also proposes 21 solutions to the aerial spraying problem. All, according to Gamble, are cost-effective and environmentally sustainable. The report also calls for community economic impacts to be included in the EIR health assessments.

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