



Mission Grove Neighborhood Association Policy Paper

SUBJECT: The 2023 Bactrocera dorsalis/Oriental Fruit Fly or OFF Outbreak and Quarantine, in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, which includes Mission Grove community in Riverside, California.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: The author of this Community Advocate Report is Bill Clark who is a resident of the Mission Grove community. He serves on the Mission Grove Neighborhood Association (MGNA) Steering Committee as a Community Advocate and is well suited to function in this capacity as a retired deputy sheriff-investigator. He has experience working with numerous city, county, state and federal regulatory and enforcement agencies. He employs a Systems Advocacy concept in his work and is focused on community health, welfare and safety issues. He uses government, academic and industry sourced public domain data in his research and reports to inform and acquaint the community on local issues.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: On October 3, 2023, the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS), issued a notice to California State, Territory and Tribal Agriculture Regulatory and Enforcement Officials under USDA-APHIS INFORMATION AND ACTION NOTICE (DA-2023-20), that USDA-APHIS and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) had expanded the OFF quarantine in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. This action was in response to the confirmed detections of 72 adult OFF flies from various trapping sites in the Redlands area by CDFA between September 28 and October 3, 2023, all were from traps placed in residential areas. As a result of these, and subsequent detections, the CDFA issued an expanded quarantine area map on December 12, 2023, to increase the quarantine area to 554 square miles. Officials announced that the OFF had been discovered in the communities of Redlands, Yucaipa, Highland, Mentone, Moreno Valley, Beaumont, Riverside, Calimesa, Lake Perris and surrounding unincorporated county areas which also includes the Mission Grove community

This Report will address several critical issues that pose serious potential risks to the health-welfare and safety of the citizens living in this quarantine area. Those risks threaten the quality of life and the enjoyment of personal property due to potential and exceptional financial losses, exposure to fines and penalties due to conflict of governmental policy and procedures

and, exposure to hazardous waste in and about the community due to the lack of diligence in governmental oversight.

All of the “in-text” sources cited in this report are available online from the respective government agencies, academic institutions and or industry sites so noted. All interviews were done in person or conducted by telephone and the identity of those persons interviewed will not be disclosed. The information and opinions expressed by this writer are based on the cited data and are intended to inform and direct the reader to the cited sources for further edification.

ISSUE # 1, THE ORIENTAL FRUIT FLY or OFF: On November 21, 2023, Jules Bernstein, Senior Public Information Officer at the University of California Riverside, Department of Entomology, authored the article titled, “One of the world’s worst pests attacks California” with a sub heading of “Agricultural nightmare as fruit flies bombard crops.” This is a well written short article detailing the OFF quarantine that the average non-scientific person will appreciate reading. Of particular importance in this article is the last two paragraphs that the home grower should pay close attention to. “It is imperative that we as residents all do our part to protect this incredibly valuable growing region where the CVC (Citrus Variety Collection) is located. This means not moving **susceptible fruit** (*emphasis added*) from your property without first **freezing, juicing, cooking, or disposing in regular trash by double-bagging** (*emphasis added*). Report any suspected sighting of exotic fruit flies to the CDFA pest hotline 1-800-491-1899. Additionally, people should cooperate with the Department of Agriculture staff if they need to inspect fruit or install traps on your property. Unfortunately, some fruit in the immediate area of the find site may need to be preemptively striped from the trees and disposed of to stop the spread of the fly. Yes, this is and unfortunate loss of produce for this season, but the fruit will be usable either way when the fly infests it.” In this article, Jules Bernstein mentioned that there are seven active quarantines spanning the length of the state, but experts say those affecting San Bernardino and Riverside counties are especially serious.

ISSUE #2, HOW DID THE OFF GET HERE: In the USDA “Fruit Fly Exclusion and Detection Strategic Plan, FY 2019-2023, published May in 2019, states in part, the Mission of the USDA APHIS’ Fruit Fly Exclusion and Detection (FFED) Program is **to protect the health and value of American agricultural resources threatened by the establishment of non-native fruit fly populations.** The Mission Statement goes on to read that Fruit Flies in the family Tephritidae are among the most destructive and well-publicized pest of fruit and vegetables around the world. The genera Anastrepha, Bactrocera, and Ceratitis pose the greatest risk to

American agriculture and are the focus of this strategic plan. The global regions where these insects are imported from are: East Asia, South East Asia, Latin America, North Africa-Sub Sahara and India generally and they can be traced to their country of origin by DNA testing.

Shipping High Value Commodities that are Time and Temperature Sensitive such as Perishable and Exotic fruits, vegetables, nuts and cut flowers are shipped by numerous International Air Cargo Aviation Companies and Passenger Airlines which service two airports situated inside the above mentioned OFF Quarantine area map. They are San Bernardino International Airport (SBD) which is approximately (7) miles north west of Redlands where the OFF was found in an established Citrus growing area. The second airport is March Air Reserve Base or March Inland Port (MIP), a Civilian and Military Joint Use Airfield located in Moreno Valley where the OFF was also discovered.

This writer contacted the March Inland Port Authority (MIPA) by telephone to obtain the USDA APHIS PPQ station contact information at the MIP for further subject inquiry. It was learned that the MIPA had no knowledge of a USDA APHIS PPQ at MIP and was directed to contact the Military Base Operations for that information. After speaking to two military officers at two different office telephone numbers it was learned that there is no USDA APHIS PPQ at or near MIP and the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) contact information at SBD was provided.

In contacting the CBP at SBD by telephone it was learned that there are no USDA APHIS PPQ stations or Code of Federal Regulations Phytosanitary Protocols (7CFR Part 305) established at SBD or MIP. The CBP official stated that the closest USDA APHIS PPQ station is located at 222 Kansas Street, El Segundo, California, at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). Both SBD and MIP have numerous industry articles available online boasting of their hosting international air freight and passenger services and supported by a broad spectrum of logistics/ transportation facilities and services at or near each port. MIPA specifically states in one article that MIP is supported by special services and facilities for live animals and refrigerated facilities for handling cut flowers and perishable and exotic foods. In the same document it states that a USDA APHIS PPQ inspector is located 19 miles away. Nineteen miles north of MIP is SBD and the CBP official stated that the closest inspector or inspection operation is located at LAX, approximately 79 miles west of MIP and 75 miles west of SBD respectively.

ISSUE #3, CONFLICT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY, PROCEDURES & LAWS: According to the CDFA Exotic Fruit Fly Regulatory Response Manual (RRM), Section 5: Appendix D-Communications 5D.110/10/01), are specific instructions for home growers, yard maintenance and landscapers and other agricultural stake holders. Of particular concern are the specified policies and procedures for the disposing of the quarantined commodities from residential property. Property owners are prohibited from selling, giving or moving quarantine area fruits and vegetables from their property if not process as specified in the RRM. Yet, the instructions are that the affected fruit and vegetables are to be stripped from the trees/plants, bagged in plastic bags and placed at curbside for the municipality or its contractors to pick up or, the commodity may be taken directly to a commercial waste facility.

It has been learned that numerous property owners have witnessed homeless persons retrieving the quarantined fruits and vegetables from the curbside containers and moving said fruits and vegetables out of the area. Another alarming complaint of property owners is that the garbage trucks are leaking a foul smelling liquid deposited on the residential streets. According to the California Motor Vehicle Code, Section 23114.(a) A vehicle may not be driven or moved on any highway unless the vehicle is so constructed, covered, or loaded as to prevent any of its contents or load other than clear water or feathers from live birds from dropping, sifting, leaking, blowing, spilling, or otherwise escaping from there vehicle.

In the United States, there are several garbage truck manufactures such as McNeilus, Heil, New Way and Amrep. In reviewing their literature this writer learned how the Garbage Truck Compactor Bodies work. They all seem to function in similar fashion and these truck bodies are well designed and constructed with modern high-tech materials. The industry standard garbage truck compaction rate functions at approximately 2750 pounds per square inch. In light of the well constructed designs, According to the United States Department of Transportation, California Department Transportation and the California Highway Patrol, garbage trucks are prone to operational damage caused by residential, industrial and agricultural wastes causing damage to the garbage truck bodies which then leak fluids onto roadways.

The popular term for garbage truck fluid is called, "Garbage Truck Juice." The scientific name for garbage truck juice is, "Leachate." Leachate is a water based fluid that has percolated through various types of solids regardless of the state or condition of the solids and has leached some of the constituents. According to the California State Water Resources Board (CSWRB) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Leachate is a

liquid pollution that is found in landfills and waste transportation vehicles. Leachate contains various molds, fungi, bacteria, residential and industrial use chemicals, heavy metals, medical waste and human and animal blood and feces which pose significant health risks for humans and animals which can cause serious diseases and potentially death.

According to the California Highway Patrol (CHP), under California Motor Vehicle Code Section 353 and Title 49, of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 171.8 define Hazardous Material as a substance or material which is capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and property when transported in a vehicle. Leachate is Classified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (CDTSC) as a Hazardous Material.

CONCLUSION: As citizens we must contend with this confusing and complex issue of conflicting policies, procedures and laws. It appears that this non-native insect was imported into the quarantine area unchecked by the USDA and its allied agencies. We are compelled to obey the quarantine regulations on one hand while we contribute to the serious environmental consequences on the other. We dispose of the fruit and vegetables according to government regulations and place said commodities at curbside to await a garbage truck. The homeless and others are scavenging from a bounty of fruits and vegetables left on the public sidewalk/roadway. The fruits and vegetables are dumped into a garbage truck from the curbside. The plastic bags, containing a solid waste are then compacted at a rate of 2750 PSI repeatedly producing a liquid waste as the garbage truck moves along its route. The liquid waste sloshes around in the garbage truck making and depositing a toxic hazardous liquid on the streets while scattering the remaining live OFF throughout the community.

It is absolutely detestable and unconscionable that the above mentioned government agencies would place the community in double jeopardy for its lack of diligence. The community needs to be made aware to these details to be informed in order to petition these government agencies and our elected officials for redress of these grievances.///bc