

# California Department of Food and Agriculture

## Invasive Fruit Fly

### Industry Frequently Asked Questions

**Background:** California is experiencing an unusually high number of invasive fruit fly detections this season. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and County Agricultural Commissioners, has initiated local regulatory measures to eradicate and prevent the statewide spread of Queensland fruit fly, Tau fruit fly, Mediterranean fruit fly and Oriental fruit fly.

#### Counties Currently Impacted by Invasive Fruit Fly Quarantines:

- **Oriental fruit fly:** Contra Costa, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino and Santa Clara Counties
- **Mediterranean fruit fly:** Los Angeles County
- **Tau fruit fly:** Los Angeles County
- **Queensland fruit fly:** Los Angeles and Ventura Counties

More information including quarantine maps, regulatory information and pest profile information for the various fruit flies may be found here:

<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/PDEP/treatment/index.html>

#### Q: What can the industry do proactively?

- An option for growers outside of the quarantine area is to start pre-harvest treatments in case a fruit fly is found nearby, and the quarantine area expands.
- County Agricultural Commissioners may issue a Treatment Agreement and monitor all pre-quarantine treatments.
- Pre-quarantine treatments are done in the same manner as the pre-harvest quarantine treatments for quarantine compliance.
- Pre-quarantine treatments are not mandatory but can help assure that growers will be able to continue harvesting and shipping their produce should the quarantine expand and include their property.
- Growers of nursery stock host plants may consider keeping them free of produce. In the event of a fruit fly quarantine, host plants with produce are placed on hold and the produce must be removed.

#### Q: What can packinghouses or nurseries do proactively?

- Packinghouses may encourage growers of host commodities to participate in voluntary, pre-quarantine treatments so harvest may occur as intended.

- Nurseries may consider continuously monitoring host nursery stock and keeping them free from produce. In the event of a fruit fly quarantine, host plants with produce are placed on hold and the produce must be removed.

**Q: What are CDFA, the USDA and County Agricultural Commissioners doing about this?**

- The USDA has announced \$103.5 million in additional funding to address fruit fly programs in California and elsewhere.
- The agencies are cooperating in trapping, treatment and quarantine efforts to address the increased number of fruit fly introductions.
- Additionally, the USDA has deployed trapping staff from throughout the United States to assist with fruit fly projects in California.
- USDA has also deployed an Incident Management Team to assist with planning, logistics and outreach efforts for the Oriental Fruit Fly project in San Bernardino and Riverside counties.
- Counties continue to support the eradication projects and are providing additional staff to help with trapping, treatment and quarantine activities.
- CDFA has partnered with the California Conservation Corps to help with trapping, larval surveys, and fruit or produce stripping.
- CDFA, USDA and County Agricultural Commissioners acknowledge the burden that is placed on growers of all sizes who participate in invasive pest response activities. While these actions may feel cumbersome, the cost to manage invasive fruit fly populations now is far less than the potential costs or loss to the agricultural industry should these fruit flies become established in California.

**Q. How are various fruit fly quarantines triggered?**

- A quarantine is triggered by the number of adult flies captured—within three miles of each other and in one life cycle:
  - Mediterranean, Melon, Caribbean fruit fly – 2
  - Mexican fruit fly – 5
  - Oriental, Guava, Peach fruit fly – 6 Rural or 8 Urban
  - All other adult invasive fruit flies (e.g., Queensland fruit fly) – 2
 OR
  - SINGLE detection of larva, mated female, or pupae indicating a breeding population.

**Q: What is considered the “core area” around a fruit fly detection?**

- The core area is part of an established quarantine area and is comprised of a 0.5-mile radius surrounding the detection of a fruit fly.

**Q. How large is the fruit fly quarantine zone(s)?**

- There are three main areas to consider within the fruit fly quarantine zone, and each has different requirements for harvest/bulk citrus movement:
  1. The property where a detection occurred
  2. Core Area: A one-half-mile radius around each detection

3. Quarantine Area: A 4.5-mile radius around each detection

**Q. What steps must growers in these three areas of the quarantine zone follow to harvest/move their bulk citrus?**

- For properties where the detection occurred and properties within the core area (0.5-mile radius around the detection site):
  - Produce is not eligible for packing, but may be stored, [processed](#) and consumed on the growing site. If properties within the core areas have no fruit fly or life stages detected on the growing grounds, produce can only be moved for [juicing](#), [processing](#), [freezing](#) etc. under compliance and safeguarding with the approval of the receiving county ag commissioner and any applicable transiting counties.
    - Ag commissioners of the county where the fruit would be received and processed do have the ability to refuse acceptance of the produce and Ag commissioners in transiting counties may also prohibit transit.
  - Host produce should be removed from the tree and properly disposed of, and not left in the field.
    - Host produce should be sent to an approved landfill or be composted, buried on site, or otherwise processed on-site in any of the approved methods under supervision by CDFA, USDA and/or the County Agricultural Commissioner.
  - Produce can be harvested and fumigated followed by a prescribed cold treatment. The fumigator and fumigation site require certification. All treatments must be conducted in accordance with the [USDA Treatment Manual](#).
- For properties outside of the core area, but inside of the quarantine zone:
  - Growers can apply regular [pre-harvest treatments](#) with approved insecticides, applied at recommended intervals, starting a sufficient time before harvest (but not less than 30 days, but may go as long as 100 days depending on the [pre-harvest treatment window](#), before harvest and a minimum of 4 treatments) to allow for the development of fruit fly eggs and larvae. Determination of the [pre-harvest treatment window](#) is based on the degree day model for the specific fruit fly. Once treatment has begun, it must continue through the harvest period.
    - The bait treatments must be made under a compliance agreement.
  - Growers can also opt to remove and dispose of host produce.
  - Eligible fruit fly host commodities can be harvested and fumigated followed by a prescribed cold treatment. The fumigator and fumigation site will require certification, and the treatment protocol is the same as fruit located within the core area above.
- All growers are encouraged to reach out to their local County Agricultural Commissioner.

**Q. What about other host crops in the quarantine zones intended for export?**

- The various quarantine situations can change rapidly, including the requirements of other states and countries. It is critical to stay in communication with your export certifier for the latest updates.

**Q: Can packers receive and pack produce grown outside of the quarantine area?**

- Yes. Produce grown outside the quarantine area can be packed in packinghouses in the quarantine area under certain protocols. However, some export destinations will not accept produce that is packed in a quarantine area, even if it is grown and harvested outside the quarantine area. Growers are encouraged to work directly with their packinghouse.

**Q. Is produce from a quarantine area able to be exported?**

- Some countries will accept produce from a quarantine area that has been treated; however, some countries will not. For the most recent information, contact your export certifier.

**Q. What can the industry do to help spread the word about the risks?**

- Remind fellow industry members of the importance of following quarantine regulations and encourage them to invest in pre-harvest treatments.
- Report any suspected invasive fruit fly sightings to CDFA, USDA or your local County Agricultural Commissioner.
- Encourage area residents to avoid moving any homegrown produce from their properties and to cooperate with agriculture officials working in their area.
- Help spread the “Don’t Pack a Pest” message to travelers or those receiving produce in the mail or through other shipping channels.
- Share social media posts created or shared by CDFA, USDA or County Agricultural Commissioners.