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MEDFLY INFESTATION DETECTED IN RANCHO PALOS VERDES AREA First Medfly infestation in Los Angeles County since 2001

SACRAMENTO, October 25, 2007 – A Mediterranean fruit fly infestation has been discovered in Rancho Palos Verdes and Rolling Hills, in Los Angeles County. To date, four wild female Medflies have been detected at two locations.

CDFA crews are preparing to begin with eradication procedures in the area. On Saturday, October 27, increased aerial releases of sterile male Medflies are scheduled to begin – at the rate of 250,000 sterile flies per square mile. The release area is 12.86 square miles. On Friday, October 26, crews will begin conducting ground treatments in a 200-meter radius—about one-eighth of a mile—from the locations of the detections. The substance being utilized is the organic compound Naturalyte (active ingredient: spinosad), a naturally occurring extract from bacteria.

Rancho Palos Verdes and Rolling Hills are already part of the Preventive Release Program, a joint USDA/CDFA project that releases millions of sterile male Medflies each week over the Los Angeles Basin. The program was introduced in 1996 and has been instrumental in redefining Medfly response in California. It has also dramatically reduced the number of infestations. Between 1987 and 1994, an average of 7.5 Medfly infestations were discovered each year in California. Since the Preventive Release Program began in 1996, there have been just seven infestations statewide. Three of the seven have been detected this year.

This is the first Medfly infestation in Los Angeles County since 2001, when flies were found in the Hyde Park area. That infestation was successfully eradicated using the same techniques that will be utilized for the current infestation.

A quarantine in the area is anticipated shortly. People will be urged not to remove fruits and vegetables from the quarantine zone.

The Medfly can infest over 260 types of fruits and vegetables, causing severe impacts on California agricultural exports and backyard gardens. A permanent infestation would result in estimated annual losses of \$1.3 to \$1.8 billion.

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The California Department of Food and Agriculture protects and promotes California's \$31.8 billion agricultural industry. California's farmers and ranchers produce a safe, secure supply of food, fiber and shelter; marketed fairly for all Californians; and produced with responsible environmental stewardship.

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