

455 Capitol Mall, Suite 802
Sacramento, CA 95814-4427

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Contact: Larry Hawkins
United States Department of Agriculture
916-930-5509
Lawrence.E.Hawkins@aphis.usda.gov

THEY'RE HERE AND THEY'RE HUNGRY...

Ad Campaign Planned to Raise Awareness of the Threat of Invasive Pests to California's Agriculture and Environment

SACRAMENTO, CA – “They’re Here and They’re Hungry” is the theme of a new advertising campaign designed to alert Californians to the environmental and economic risks posed by invasive pests. The campaign, funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, launches on August 17.

“Few people are aware of the ongoing threat posed by a variety of different pests,” said Larry Hawkins, public affairs officer with USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. “They may have heard about Medfly or glassy-winged sharpshooters, but they don’t realize that we are continually battling a variety of pests and that new ones arrive regularly.”

Hawkins said California is especially vulnerable to invasive pests. The State’s large seaports, huge volume of international travelers and thousands of pieces of daily mail and packages combine to offer invasive pests easy access to California’s agriculture and natural resources.

An invasive pest is any kind of damaging animal, insect, plant or plant disease that is not native to the State. As these pests compete with native species for resources, they cause damage to local ecosystems and wreak havoc on crops and local plant life.

“California offers residents and visitors a unique natural environment with many fun experiences—everything from picking or growing your own produce to exploring parks and nature to enjoying a multitude of outdoor activities,” said Hawkins. “Invasive pests can greatly impact the natural environment, as well as California’s robust agriculture industry. USDA is constantly working to find smart and effective solutions to manage invasive pests in California. We encourage people to learn more about what they can do to help.”

The advertising campaign launches on August 17 with print, radio and television ads. The television ads can be viewed online at www.HungryPests.com, along with more information about invasive pests in California.

The campaign is supported by the Hungry Pests Coalition, a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that understand the threat of invasive pests to California ecosystems, quality of life, food supply and economic system. The Coalition is committed to protecting agricultural resources, forests, parks and other plant life; supporting programs to eliminate or control the pests that threaten these resources; working to limit economic damage that occurs when invasive pests take hold; and being a credible and audible voice of authority in the dialogue about invasive pests. For more information, visit www.HungryPests.com.

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