

NOW Mating Disruption Neighborhood Management

About our Project

NOW Neighborhood Management aims to increase the use of navel orangeworm (NOW) mating disruption (MD) among growers of almonds, walnuts and pistachios, particularly in smaller parcels. The project will encourage creation of larger NOW management blocks across host crops that plan for area-wide deployment of MD. Funded by a grant from the CA Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR), the Almond Board of California (ABC), with support from Land IQ, Blue Diamond Growers (BDG), and UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE), has created an online tool where growers and PCAs can express interest in MD neighborhood blocks. In areas with significant interest, project partners will help organize meetings and facilitate connections among neighboring growers, along with publicizing the availability of grants from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that can fund IPM practices, including MD.

Why

NOW is a key pest in California tree nuts, which cover over 2 million acres in the Central Valley of California. There is a well understood IPM program for NOW management: orchard sanitation, monitoring of flights, timely sprays, timely harvest, and most recently use of MD pheromones. MD interferes with the natural process that male NOW moths rely on to find mates. By strategically placing “dispensers” throughout the orchard and flooding the air with a pheromone that disrupts the male’s ability to find females and mate, users are able to delay or reduce mating and egg deposition.

Research has shown a 35 to 53 percent reduction in NOW damage when MD is used in blocks as small as 40 acres, while the rate of damage reduction in larger blocks is as much as 78%. Because of more limited benefits, adoption of MD however has lagged among small growers, as MD is most effective for controlling NOW when field sizes are greater than 40 acres.

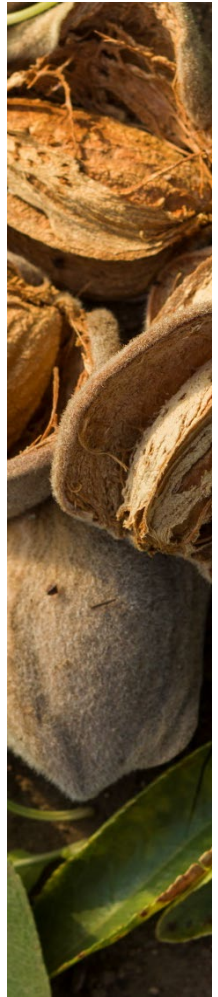
What

With increased interest in neighborhood management, this project has developed an online tool at agneighbors.com (QR code and Passcode at right) to help drive area-wide effective and voluntary MD adoption, across multiple crops and farm sizes. Growers that currently use MD and those not using MD are encouraged to use the tool. Piloted among growers in west Modesto, the tool is now available across the entire growing region. Where large contiguous blocks of growers using the tool show interest, in 2023 another field site will be selected for focused outreach and adoption. Alliance team members will work to develop MD neighborhood blocks with these sites, and others as identified by the tool.

How

On-line tool development is being led by Land IQ, which has worked with ABC and has field level data across all crop types. PCAs and growers are invited to identify parcels they manage on a map, whether they currently use MD, and through participation, express interest in forming a NOW Neighborhood Management Block. In areas where interest among growers reaches 40 contiguous acres or more, participants will be notified that there is a match with their neighbors. Growers may also qualify for NRCS incentive funds to deploy IPM practices including MD. Part of the project is coordinating meetings in the pilot sites between growers, PCAs and NRCS, to increase adoption through use of NRCS cost-share incentives.

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Passcode: **nowmd**

