

The Macadamia Society views the Guava Moth and Green Vegie Bug as the two major insect scourges facing macadamia growers. We are now involved in activities we hope will lead to better control of both problems.

At the 2016 AGM a motion was passed that the macadamia society could pledge \$5000 towards a Plant and Food Research programme to work towards control of the Guava Moth. The Feijoa industry also pledged money to the programme.

As a matter of general information the guava moth has not yet been identified south of Auckland. Some of you may have heard otherwise, some of you may know otherwise, but as of the time of the application the persons responsible for identifying strange specimens had NOT received Guava Moth evidence from south of Auckland. However, it is believed it is only a matter of time before the spread bypasses the city.

I stress this fact because it means many macadamia growers have not been damaged by Guava Moth so may not understand the impact this moth may have on their orchard. We have had increasing infestation over the past decade and there have been times we have estimated that half the crop has fallen prematurely.

The Moth lays its egg on the outside of the husk. The egg hatches and the caterpillar burrows through the husk and matures at the junction of the shell and the husk. It does not get inside the shell so does not damage the nut. However, as the caterpillar grows it breaks down the system that passes moisture between husk and shell causing the shell to dry and split and the nut to fall prematurely. You can recognize guava moth infection at the early stage by seeing a 1-2mm hole drilled into the husk. Later 'frass' is visible on the surface of the husk and at the split in the husk. Frass is material which has passed through the gut system of the caterpillar and if you've never seen it you will nonetheless recognize it at once.

Having two significantly threatened industries involved supported the Plant and Food Application for funding from the MPI. Part of the response from the MPI is quoted below:

**2017/18 Sustainable Farming Fund Application: 405237**

Thank you for your application into the 2017/18 Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) round. I am pleased to advise that your application “**Sustainable management of guava moth**” has been approved for funding to a value of \$289,615.00, subject to a contract being signed with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) by 31 May 2017.

Regards

Matthew Perkins **Manager Investment Programmes**  
Sector Partnerships and Programmes Ministry for Primary Industries

The scientific team are based at the Plant and Food Research Centre in Auckland and have a three year program officially commencing in July 2017. As the team are eager they are already collecting infested material and starting their programme to breed the moth in captivity.

In the first year they will study distribution, natural enemies, rearing methods, mass trapping and ‘Lure and Kill’. The second and third years will concentrate on the ‘Lure and Kill’, Mating disruption and Insecticide efficiency.

I’ve met most members of the scientific team and I wish them all the best on this project.