

Japan eases restrictions on Ca. produce

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block has announced that Japanese officials have lifted restrictions

on imports of California produce from areas outside of those regulated by the U.S. Department of

Agriculture for Mediterranean fruit fly. Japan accepts quarantine boundaries as established by USDA. This means California

produce originating from outside USDA regulated areas can move to Japan without treatment. Produce from inside the regulated areas continues to be prohibited entry by Japan.

The announcement follows discussions between USDA and

Japanese agricultural officials. The team, headed by Harvey L. Ford, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, met in Tokyo to reach agreement on the extent of restrictions necessary to contain Medfly. California agriculture officials were present during the discussions.

We are most gratified that the Japanese have come to accept the USDA quarantine boundaries, said Block. The Japanese action is a further sign of the tremendous progress that has been made toward eradication of Medfly.

Block said the easing of restrictions comes at

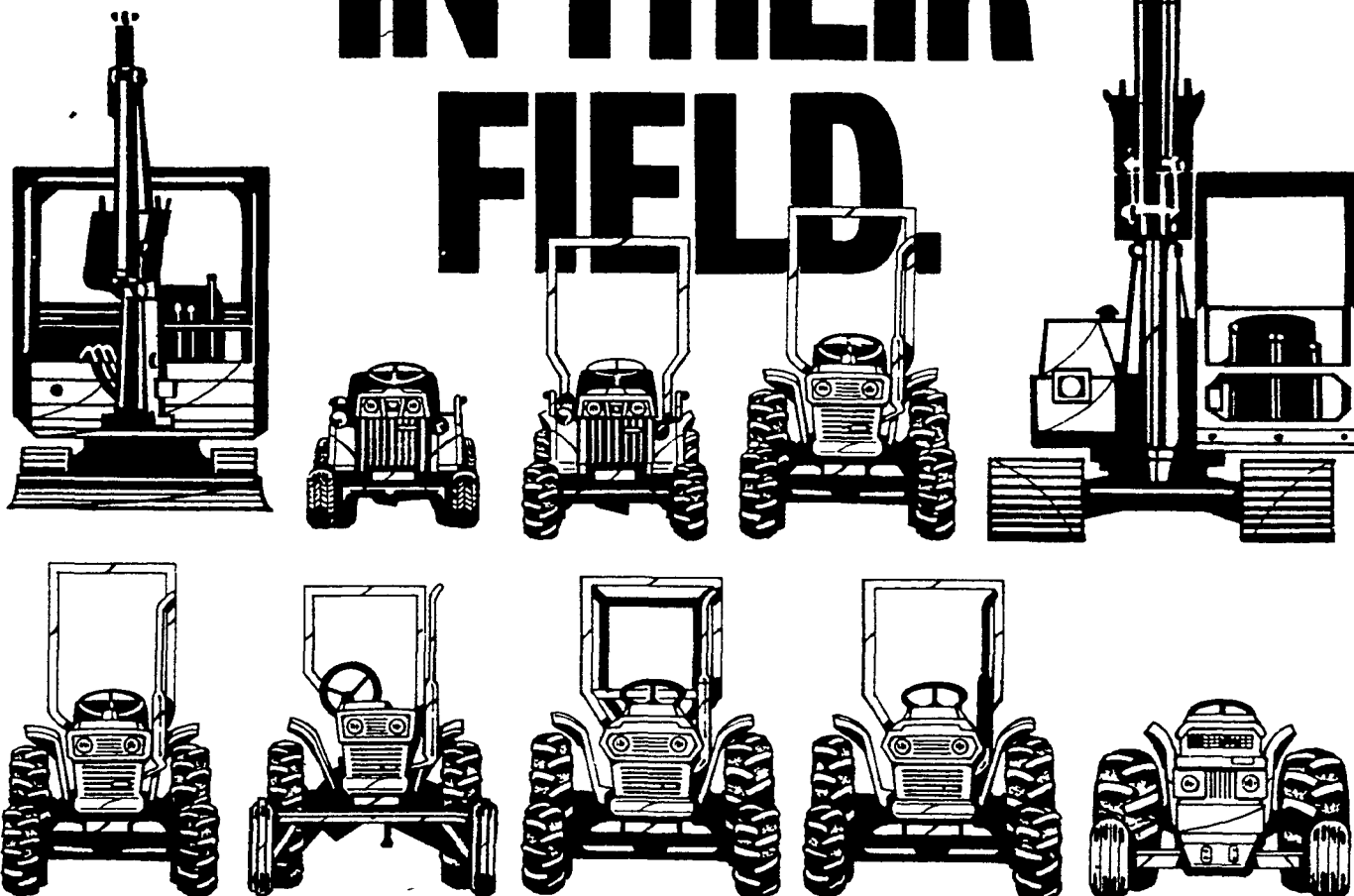
an opportune time for California growers, who are just entering their major shipping season. Millions of dollars in losses to California producers have resulted from Japanese restrictions.

In January, Japan announced it would relax requirements imposed last August — requiring treatment of produce except for lemons, from all of California — only when Medfly eradication was announced in Los Angeles and Stanislaus Counties.

Counties still falling with the USDA regulated areas include all of Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Alameda and part of Santa Cruz. Their regulated status will be evaluated through the summer. No fertile Medflies have been found in California since last November.

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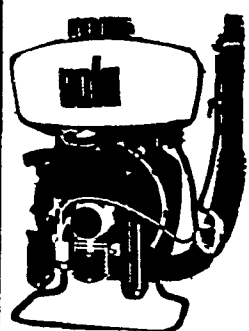
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