

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 1043
Asked on 2 September 2004

MR ROBERTS asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (Mr Palaszczuk)—

QUESTION:

With he provide an update on the program to eliminate fire ants, with particular reference to the Nudgee Electorate?

ANSWER:

In June 2004 the initial three-year phase of the Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program was completed. The original infested areas, included those areas that lie in the Nudgee electorate, had received their third and final season of treatment and in accordance with the national eradication plan, staff from the Fire Ant Control Centre (FACC) will now conduct two years of surveillance in these areas to ensure we have effectively eradicated the pest.

There have been no fire ants detected in the Nudgee electorate or indeed in the eastern zone of the infested area for over eleven months, which indicates that the FACC is close to eradicating the ant from this area. Over the entire infested area that is composed of 133 000 land parcels, only 12 parcels have had active fire ant infestations detected upon them since the completion of last year's treatment activities. If no more infestations are detected, this would equate to 99.99% of parcels in the restricted area free of Fire Ant.

Surveillance of the Nudgee electorate and the remainder of the eastern area will continue throughout this year and next year after which, if no infestations are detected the area will be declared free of Fire Ant and normal operations will cease in the area.

It is important now that the eradication program heads into its next stage that the commitment towards eradication does not wane. While few Fire Ant infested areas now remain, the challenge over the remainder of the Program is to validate that eradication efforts have been successful.