

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 631

Asked on 29 April 2008

MR HAYWARD asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

QUESTION:

As I understand the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries will be represented at a series of weed eradication seminars in the United States—

How will attendance at these seminars assist in the battle against invasive pest weeds in Queensland?

ANSWER:

A Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) officer, Dr Dane Panetta, Principal Scientist, Invasive Plant and Animal Science, Biosecurity Queensland, was invited by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to visit their Sacramento facilities and to undertake a number of weed eradication-related activities including participation and presentation at an eradication workshop.

Dr Panetta is an established world authority on weed eradication. He is currently leader of the Incursion Response subprogram in the Weeds Cooperative Research Centre (Weeds CRC) program that deals with weed incursions.

Advancing our understanding of weed eradication will improve our ability to predict when weed eradication programs are likely to be successful and how long they need to run. This will ensure that Queensland's investment in weed eradication programs is directed in the most efficient way.

The workshop and associated activities that Dr Panetta attended provided an invaluable opportunity to showcase Australian weed eradication research and to demonstrate to Californian researchers how to apply some of the Australian weed eradication tools that have been developed by Dr Panetta and other leading Australian researchers.

Dr Panetta was also recognised in being asked to deliver the Dan Hess Lectureship, an honorary talk that had not been awarded for three years.

Dr Panetta also gained access to data from CDFA weed eradication programs. Data limitations are currently a serious barrier to further development and application of weed eradication theory. Access to the Californian data will advance our science in this area and our future decision-making abilities.

This travel is consistent with the objectives of Dr Panetta's current Weeds CRC project '*Monitoring and evaluation of incursion management strategies*'. Funds for his overseas fare and incidentals have been provided by the Weeds CRC. The CDFA appointed Dr Panetta as an unpaid consultant to enable them to cover all of his costs while he was in California.