

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 1410
Asked on 7 October 2009

MR WENDT asked the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland (MR MULHERIN)–

QUESTION:

What biosecurity services and programs does Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries provide to support the needs of producers in the south east corner?

ANSWER:

Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries does high level plant and animal science that contributes to biosecurity for Queensland's industries. This includes research in the area of weeds in crop and pasture systems, plant breeding programs to improve resistance to pests and diseases, research into better diagnostic techniques for diseases and pests in forestry and horticulture and in the area of animal science the work includes research into contaminants and toxins of livestock and improvements in parasite vaccines. In addition to this science the Biosecurity Queensland business group directly delivers services through four main programs to support the needs of producers in the south-east corner.

The four main Biosecurity Queensland programs supporting the needs of producers in the South-East corner are:

1. **Animal Biosecurity and Animal Welfare** - Managing the risks presented by animal pests and diseases to Queensland's primary industry production and achieving standards for welfare, ethics and exhibited animals to meet community expectations and market access for Queensland's livestock industries and biotechnology sector.

Disease surveillance, monitoring, containment and eradication programs and administration of accreditation schemes including surveillance for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy, Bovine Johne's Disease, H1N1, Hendra Virus, Cattle Tick and National Livestock Identification Scheme and monitoring of interstate livestock movements and Animal Welfare all contribute to maintenance of market access for domestic and export markets for Queensland primary producers. Extension and education with high risk industry participants particularly at the peri-urban and lifestyle agriculture interface are a priority for Biosecurity Queensland Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Officers in South-East Queensland.

2. **Plant Biosecurity and Product Integrity** - Protecting valuable Queensland plant industries that contribute significantly to the regional and national economy. The program aims to mitigate risks and impacts associated with product quality and safety (integrity) and plant pests and diseases to the economy, the environment, social amenity and human health. In the south east corner considerable inspection services support is provided on-farm and through the Rocklea fruit and vegetable markets, as well as sampling for chemical residue testing.

This program provides a certification and accreditation service which verifies that consignments of plants and products and other restricted items meet specified

intrastate, interstate and international quarantine or market access requirements allowing South-East Queensland produce to trade with our interstate partners. Further, the program through licensing, permits and accreditation ensures the appropriate use of agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals and minimises the impact of high risk use of agvet chemicals in trade, health and environment in South-East Queensland.

3. **Invasive Plants and Animals** - Leads and actively supports the management of weeds and pest animals in Queensland, such as Class 1 pest control, including red eared slider turtles and a variety of pest plants that have a range of production and environmental impacts; provision of advice regarding control of pest species; assisting Local Governments develop Local Area Pest Management Plans; and provision of training and 1080 for local government wild dog control projects.

In South-East Queensland, an eradication program is in place for the Class 1 weed, Mexican feather grass, which if established would cause a significant reduction in pasture yield. In addition, Biosecurity Queensland continues to support and facilitate local government pest management on a range of issues including planning, wild dog and rabbit control and weed problems such as parthenium and fireweed.

4. **Tramp Ants** - Ants are among the worst invasive species in the world and the worst invasive ants are tramp ants, so called because of their association with people. Tramp ants can arrive in Queensland by a number of means. There are two tramp ant species found in South-East Queensland (Fire Ants and Yellow Crazy Ants) that are the subject of eradication efforts by Biosecurity Queensland.

Recent impact assessments have estimated the costs of red imported fire ant to the government, industry, community and environment would be in the order of \$43 billion over the next thirty years if the pest was left uncontrolled. Biosecurity Queensland also has systems in place to facilitate on-going market access for affected Queensland producers within fire ant restricted areas.

These programs' services contribute significantly to supporting the needs of producers in the South-East through:

- **Prevention:** Regulatory and physical measures to ensure that incursions are prevented, or their effects mitigated; communication on movement restrictions; licensing of commercial chemical applicators; administration of ruminant feed ban; education, awareness and on-farm biosecurity; and monitoring and implementation of animal welfare standards.
- **Surveillance:** Early warning, systematic examination and testing of an animal, plant or area to determine the presence or absence of invasive species, chemical residues or contaminants; chemical and contaminant testing of Queensland produce; fruit fly trapping; area of freedom surveillance; and National TSE (Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy) surveillance program.
- **Preparedness:** Arrangements to ensure that, should an incursion occur, all those resources and services needed to cope with the effects can be efficiently mobilised and deployed including emergency response training; National Livestock Identification System and other traceability systems; and Standard Operating Procedures, manuals and information systems.

- **Response Actions:** Taken in anticipation of, during and immediately after an incursion to ensure that its effects are minimised, such as Equine Influenza eradication, Tramp Ant eradication, Hendra disease responses and Class 1 weeds eradication programs e.g. Mexican Feather Grass.
- **Recovery:** Reconstruction of physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical well-being.
- **Ongoing Management:** Management of programs such as Cattle tick, endemic banana diseases, environmental contaminants and established invasive species.