

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 1012
Asked on 16 June 2011

MS NELSON-CARR asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies (MR MULHERIN)—

QUESTION:

How are Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation scientists assisting growers to identify and manage plant viruses spread by thrips?

ANSWER:

Viruses are a major cause of yield and quality loss in many Queensland vegetable crops and are often spread by thrips which are small sap sucking insects.

Vegetable production in Queensland is valued at approximately \$1 billion and is a major contributor to rural and regional employment. As such, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) scientists have been undertaking research, development and extension into the most profitable ways to manage thrips and the viruses they spread.

One such project led by DEEDI scientists titled “Integrated Viral Disease Management in Vegetable Crops” aims to enhance the capacity of the vegetable industry to implement integrated viral disease management and reduce the economic impact of diseases to industry.

As part of this project DEEDI scientists identified sources of resistance to some viruses transmitted by thrips. The resistances identified are now being incorporated into a collaborative breeding program.

In addition to this project, DEEDI is creating an increased awareness of virus diseases spread by thrips and how to manage them.

This increased awareness is being generated through industry seminars, personal consultations with vegetable growers and the publication of farm notes which form the basis of a guide to the integrated management of virus diseases in vegetables.

The industry seminars have been held in all Queensland regions and have targeted all areas where virus diseases are a production problem. The published material is available on the DEEDI web site.

DEEDI’s plant disease and virus research, development and extension is an excellent example of DEEDI’s efforts in ensuring Queensland businesses are protected now and into the future.