

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 464

Asked on 5 April 2011

MR HOPPER asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies (MR MULHERIN)–

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise for 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 (to date) (reported separately) how many biosecurity/stock inspection officers were employed in (a) the whole of Queensland, (b) towns on the border between New South Wales and Queensland and (c) Far North Queensland?

ANSWER:

- (a) Biosecurity Queensland has a number of staff across Queensland appointed with inspector powers. The appointments are under a number of administrative instruments designed to deliver consumer confidence by managing the risks of animal biosecurity and animal welfare, plant biosecurity and product integrity and eradication programs. The work-force is continually assessed with respect to operational priorities.

Staff positions with these appointments since 2001 have consistently varied between 115 and 121 and exclude staff in roles of invasive plants and animals and programs such as Red Imported Fire Ants, Electric Ants and Asian Honey Bees.

In 2008-09 there were 121 positions with these inspectorial powers and that number remained the same in 2009-10.

In 2010–11 there are 119 positions comprising both animal biosecurity and welfare officers, and plant biosecurity and product integrity officers, as well as a number of specialist investigation officers.

In addition to these positions, Biosecurity Queensland has 12 field based veterinary officers and also retains up to 20 additional casual plant biosecurity certification inspectors.

Across the state there are also 15 Third Party Provider arrangements in place employing a total of 38 people that deliver cattle tick inspection services. This service has freed up some of the traditional stock inspector work to allow officers to now deliver higher priority activities for the animal industries such as disease surveillance, biosecurity responses and emergency response preparedness.

- (b) The Queensland, New South Wales border region covering the Cunnamulla, St George, Goondiwindi, Warwick, Boonah and Beaudesert districts had 9 inspectorial staff in the 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 years. Resourcing is provided in order to meet demand, and is in addition to officers and Third Party Providers servicing industry across the South East Queensland region.

- (c) In far North Queensland the numbers of inspectorial staff remained consistent in 2008-09 and 2009-10 at 17.

In 2010-11 the number of staff with inspectorial powers is 16.

In addition, to these, there are 2 veterinary officer positions at Cairns and Mareeba, and 2 temporary part-time plant biosecurity and product integrity staff based at Coen in the dry season.

These exclude the workforces based in this area covering Electric Ants, Asian Honey Bees and Invasive Plants and Animals.