

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 746

Asked on 13 June 2018

MR J MCDONALD asked the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise (a) the current number of fire ant nests discovered that require treatment and (b) the waiting time for that treatment?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Red Imported Fire Ant Program (the Program) is a national program supported and funded by all states and territories. The Program aims to eradicate this significant and invasive pest from South East Queensland over a ten year period.

(a) Since 1 January 2018, approximately 16 000 fire ant nests have been detected on 400 sites across South East Queensland throughout the Program's operational area.

Of the 16,000 nests, 95 per cent of these infestations have received treatment by either an initial bait application when the sample has been collected; by direct nest injection which is an aggressive treatment which kills the nest within three days; or by the planned broad scale bait application which is scheduled throughout the warmer months between September and May each year.

These detections have been within the local government areas of Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim, Somerset, Ipswich, Gold Coast, Logan, Redlands, Brisbane and Moreton Bay.

(b) Further assessment of all infestations is conducted to determine the most appropriate containment or eradication treatment method, which may be a direct nest injection or planned broad scale treatment application up to six times.

High risk infestation is defined as occurring on sporting fields and schools, and areas around the Program's outer operational boundary. These are treated within two business days by direct nest injection which is a method that kills the ants within three days.

Infestations which occur in areas which present a lower risk of spread to the Program and do not pose a risk to the public's safety are also treated by direct nest injection.