

Question on Notice

No. 789

Asked on 16 June 2021

MR J MCDONALD ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the National Red Imported Fire Ants Program and changes to the zoning boundaries to include Lockyer suburbs in zones 1 and 2 as both a prevention for re-infestation and higher risk from detected nests — Will the Minister advise what consultation (workshops, letters, face to face visits) has occurred with affected landholders to maintain productivity in line with biosecurity fact sheets and what compensation is being offered to primary producers who have been informed they cannot sell or move their baled hay due to their inclusion in Zone 1?

ANSWER:

The National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (the Program) is a nationally cost-shared program funded by all Australian State and Territory Governments, and the Federal Government. The Queensland Government's funding contribution is 10 per cent. The Program is governed strategically and operationally by a national Steering Committee and independent chair, who work with Biosecurity Queensland to deliver the Program on behalf of all jurisdictions.

As per normal protocol, notification of changes to the fire ant biosecurity zones was provided through emails to industry associations and key stakeholders including Dairy Australia, Australian Fodder Industry Association, Agforce, Meat and Livestock Australia, Queensland Farmers Federation, Queensland Dairy Farmers, Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority, as well as directly to 223 hay producers in South East Queensland whose details were drawn from the Program's database. A range of face-to-face meetings, forums and events were held with primary producers, including a Hay Industry Collaboration Group (December 2020) and a Hay Industry Field Day (May 2021). The changes were also detailed on the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' website; sent to approximately 10 000 people through the Program's email newsletter; and communicated to impacted areas through targeted social media advertising and through local newspapers and radio stations.

Hay producers within a fire ant biosecurity zone can sell or move their baled hay provided they implement the required fire ant risk mitigations contained in the *Biosecurity Regulation 2016*. Non-compliant hay can not be moved off the property, but can still be used on the property.

There is no compensation for individuals for costs associated with complying with their obligations under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.