

## Question on Notice

No. 1437

Asked on 15 November 2023

**MR A PERRETT** asked the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (HON M FURNER)—

### QUESTION:

With reference to the Fire Ant Eradication Program—

Will the Minister provide the Biosecurity Queensland data that proves the government's claims of positive progress in the eradication and containment efforts including advising what methods Biosecurity Queensland uses to collect data, the frequency, the sites and where data is published?

### ANSWER:

The National Fire Ant Eradication Program (the Program) leverages international experience and information with the management of Red Imported Fire Ants to assess its success in eradicating and containing fire ant populations. The Program's scientists use modelling based on this data and estimate that without the interventions undertaken by the Program, Southeast Queensland (SEQ) infestations would have spread as far south as Canberra, north to Bowen and west to Longreach in Queensland.

Fire ant spread in the United States is currently reported to be 45 km per year and in China reported to be 80 km per year. Through the work of the Program in Australia, fire ant spread has been limited to approximately 5 km per year within SEQ.

Locally the Program collects data through reports from the community and through the surveillance and treatment efforts of its staff. The Program has two primary business information systems for data management and support of operational activities — the Community and Stakeholder Engagement System (CaSES) and the Fire Ant Management System (FAMS).

CaSES is a bespoke cloud-hosted application containing information about the Program's responsive treatment, Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST) activities, client information and associated marketing activities. The FAMS database holds operations and spatial data used to plan, coordinate and evaluate Program activities.

Field teams access and collect data through the Forage mobile field application. Field officers engaged in eradication and surveillance activities are equipped with tablet devices with digital data entry capability to allow direct entry of data into the customised database. Field-sourced data is collected in real time throughout the work day.

Data demonstrating the Program's progress is reported to the National Steering Committee, comprising representatives of the Federal Government and all state and territory governments, on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. The Program's annual and quarterly reports are publicly available on the Program's website: [www.fireants.org.au/home/about-us/publications](http://www.fireants.org.au/home/about-us/publications).