

Question on Notice

No. 672

Asked on Thursday, 23 May 2024

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

QUESTION:

With reference to fire ant eradication and suppression zones, and DAF advice that from 30 June 2024, all councils must look for, report, and treat fire ants on lands they own and manage and given this will massively increase the burden on ratepayers—

Will the Minister advise if councils will be eligible to make a claim against the National Red Fire Ant Eradication Program for additional costs they incur?

ANSWER:

Councils are not eligible to make a claim against the National Red Fire Ant Eradication Program for additional costs they incur.

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, everyone has a general biosecurity obligation (GBO) to take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent or minimise biosecurity risks, including risks posed by fire ants.

To assist this process, the Queensland Government established the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST) in 2022 to work with landholders to reduce the density of fire ants in the suppression area to support eradication. This density reduction will reduce the risk of fire ant dispersal out of the suppression area by human assisted movement or natural spread.

FAST has been meeting with affected Councils over the past 12-18 months to prepare them for fire ant self-management. This has included providing free bait, assistance with storage and equipment, training, and technical advice to enable all Councils to meet their general biosecurity obligation.