

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 80

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Fruit Fly funding

Proof Hansard page: 93 (25.5.2015)

Senator BACK asked:

Dr Troy: A series of workshops is being planned that is starting in June and July around the country in the major fruit fly host areas. It will go through the research development and extension plan and work through with different communities their research priorities under that plan. Therefore, it is looking at what the issues are for that area and what needs to be made a priority or what will be a lesser priority.

Senator BACK: On notice, can you tell us what sort of funding there is available and from which sources that funding is coming from?

Dr Troy: I can take that on notice, thank you, Senator.

Answer:

The workshops are being run by the Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre (PBCRC). Each workshop will be hosted by the regional representative of the National Fruit Fly Strategy Advisory Committee. The PBCRC is investing approximately \$30 000 to run the workshops and these are part of a larger project within the PBCRC to provide fruit fly leadership, including development and assisting implementation of the National Fruit Fly Research, Development and Extension Plan.

The RD&E plan and the outcomes of the regional workshops will guide future research funding from government and industry sources. The PBCRC has \$4 million of funding allocated to the RD&E plan.

The Australian Government recently provided \$3.7million in funding via the Australian Research Council for Macquarie University's Centre for Fruit Fly Biosecurity Innovation. The focus of the Centre for Fruit Fly Biosecurity Innovation will be on developing methods for horticulture to manage fruit fly in Australia, including new ways of targeting pests and offering training for scientists. The centre will run for five years. The scope and design of the projects were informed by the priorities in the National Fruit Fly Strategy RD&E plan.

Question: 80 (continued)

Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd received a \$2.35 million research grant through the Australian Government Rural Research and Development for Profit Grants Programme. The project is for the area wide management of Queensland fruit fly using the sterile insect technique. The grant will be supplemented by \$2.82 million of in-kind investment from research partners including CSIRO, Queensland University of Technology, and a grape and wine group. The grant will be managed as part of the SIT plus project, which is a commercial partnership led by the South Australian Government, Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd, CSIRO and Plant and Food Research Australia. The Australian Government is providing a further \$17.98 million through Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd and also funding through CSIRO as part of the SIT plus project.

There are numerous other ongoing fruit fly projects around Australia, which derive funding from a variety of sources, including The Australian Research Council, Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd, the PBCRC, state governments and universities.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

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Senator LAZARUS asked:

Dr Troy: They are managing the incursion in New Zealand. So they are under eradication now.

Senator LAZARUS: Do they use the same pesticides as we do?

Ms van Meurs: I will take most of that on notice. They do baiting programs like we do. If we have an exotic incursion, we try to use baiting programs as well. So we are baiting to try to attract the fruit fly and using the least spray as we can. So they will use a similar system.

Answer:

New Zealand are using two types of chemicals in their eradication campaign for Queensland fruit fly. Fipronil is being used as part of a bait that is sprayed onto branches and leaves inside tree canopies. The bait is made up of a protein to attract adult flies and a low dilution of fipronil to kill the flies.

On properties in New Zealand where infestations of fruit flies are found bifenthrin is used as a foliar spray. Bifenthrin is also used in granular form on the ground where it is watered-in and covered with plastic. The ground treatment is to kill any fruit fly pupae that may be in the soil.

The baiting systems in Australia typically use different chemicals and the choice of chemical varies from state to state. For instance, the South Australian government uses Spinosad as the active ingredient in their baiting programs. In other areas, Maldison is a common choice of insecticide.

Fipronil and bifenthrin are both available in Australia, however specific registration with the APVMA may be required for general use on fruit flies. As part of the recently endorsed National Fruit Fly Research, Development & Extension Plan, one of the key projects is to investigate the registration of existing chemicals that are not currently permitted for fruit fly control. Research will also be needed on in-field testing to find how best these chemicals can be applied in Australian conditions.