

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2013
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 71

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division/Australian Wool Innovation

Topic: Funding for Wild Dogs

Proof Hansard page: 53 (28/05/2013)

Senator BACK asked:

Senator BACK: If we got you to give a demonstration, then it might be an animal welfare issue. Can I go to your wild dog program. I have obviously been interested in the work of your Dr Jane Littlejohn. The results seem to be very impressive. Can you give us some updated information? How much are you spending under the wild dog program? Where is the money being spent and are you intending to keep this program going?

Mr McCullough: Yes. There are a couple of things that we are doing in this area. We fund the invasive animal CRC, which does work in this area to the tune of about \$400,000 a year. I can provide you, on notice if you wish, exact figures in this area, but it is in the order of \$400,000. With regard to our wild dog eradication program, working with municipalities and council groups and well organised wool grower groups, we allocate a budget of \$1.1 million to that each year.

Senator BACK: Of AWI funds?

Mr McCullough: Yes, with matching government funds.

Senator BACK: Federal government funds?

Mr McCullough: Yes.

Answer:

The following table outlines Australian Wool Innovation's expenditure on wild dog programs as at 13 June 2013 for the years 2011–12 and earlier, 2012–13 (estimated) and 2013–14 (forecast).

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Question: 71 (continued)

Data as at 13th June 2013		11–12 and earlier	12–13 estimate	13–14 and later forecast
Projects				
ON-28	Consultancy advice - social science	100% Eligible R&D		
		23 046	9 475	
ON-47	1080 aerial baiting for NSW APVMA registration at 40 baits/km co funded with NSW DPI	100% Eligible R&D		
		179 600	180 600	162 000
ON-49	Extension and awareness - national	100% Eligible R&D		
		74 701	7 218	7 200
ON-61	Best Wool Best Lamb wild dog group facilitation and planning - Vic	100% Eligible R&D		
		37 500	33 000	
ON-72	Wild dog management in Australia - social science - national	100% Eligible R&D		
			141 013	192 976
ON-74	Predator control field days - Qld	100% Eligible R&D		
		30 000	28 000	
ON-80	PhD - social science - NSW	100% Eligible R&D		
		20 000	1 000	
ON-81	On ground control - Round 1- national	0% Eligible R&D		
		136 935	79 500	
ON-91	Wild Dog Skills Western Division NSW - trapping and awareness	100% Eligible R&D		
		136 935	79 500	
ON-94	Wild dog Coordinators- SA, Vic, Qld	100% Eligible R&D		
		304 842	603 924	368 566
ON-112	Trapping schools - Qld	100% Eligible R&D		
		41 672	78 191	110 810
ON-64/174/175	Grower consultation - national	100% Eligible R&D		
		15 855	29 236	
ON-219	On ground control - Round 2 - national	0% Eligible R&D		
			183 815	925 693
ON- 210	Triple bottom line - national	100% Eligible R&D		
			667 776	222 592
ON-210	National Wild dog Facilitator - national	100% Eligible R&D		
		268 471	152 000	668 000
Total		1 269 557	2 274 248	2 657 837

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Question: 72

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division/Australian Wool Innovation

Topic: Cooperative Research Centre (CRC)

Proof Hansard page: 54-55 (28/05/2013)

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

Senator WILLIAMS: So, you are saying they have been dragging their feet? Did you relocate the money elsewhere?

Mr McCullough: We have.

Senator WILLIAMS: Where did that go?

Mr McCullough: We have had to pay for it. It has had to go in there. That is the difference. They have failed on a post-farm research project. We believe they have failed to meet the agreed milestones. It is not as if we invented these milestones. They were agreed with them. They failed, but we had no option other than to pay that money in.

Senator WILLIAMS: That is over the next 12 months?

Mr McCullough: It is over the next 12 months.

Senator WILLIAMS: And then you are stopping the funding?

Mr McCullough: Our contract with the CRC extinguishes itself on 30 June next year.

Senator WILLIAMS: So, you saying that you still have to pay money and you are not happy with the results that you have been getting until now?

Mr McCullough: Correct.

Senator WILLIAMS: You said that you reallocated the money. Where did that go?

Mr McCullough: I will take that on notice. Ms Littlejohn has been given the charter to find a home for that \$625,000 and she has.

Answer:

To ensure Australian Wool Innovation fulfils its overall \$10 million commitment over the life of the Sheep Cooperative Research Centre (Sheep CRC), the balance of payments to the Sheep CRC for the 2013–14 financial year are summarised below:

Program	Project	AWI contribution
Program 1 - Transforming sheep and their management	Project 1.2 - reproduction efficiency	\$100 000
	Project 1.9 - coordination of program 1	\$40 000
Program 4 - Information Nucleus	Project 4.1 - Design and analysis	\$300 000
	Project 4.2 - Operations	\$294 500
Program 5 - Education and training	Project 5.1- Post graduate training	\$150 000
TOTAL AWI funding		\$884 500

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Question: 73

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division/Australian Wool Innovation

Topic: Wild Dogs

Proof Hansard page: 55 (28/05/2013)

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

Senator WILLIAMS: Just back to wild dogs, following on from Senator Back—I was at the Tenterfield Show in February. They have national parks around Tenterfield, like we seem to have everywhere these days. Wild dogs are a serious problem. In talking to cross-bred lamb producers there, they are just going out of sheep and going to cattle. In Queensland, the wild dog problem is so bad that when the cows are calving the dogs are attacking the calves. I mean this is getting a really serious problem about our nation's production. We heard about food security from the Greens in a speech a couple of weeks ago. We are losing our food security because of national parks being homes for wild dogs, as well as bushfires and everything else they create. What is the problem with doing a huge baiting of a national park? Is it a native animal such as the koala, et cetera? What I am saying is, what is the problem if we went in a helicopter over the national park out at Tenterfield and put tonnes of baits? Is there a problem with killing native animals such as the koala or whatever?

Mr McCullough: I do not know that, but I will take that question on notice and provide an answer.

Answer:

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) supports an evidence based, cross-tenure approach to wild dog management. The landscape is assessed at the regional level by regional land managers so that the most appropriate wild dog control tools can be used. Each regional land manager including national parks, will come to an agreement on the control measures to be used in the region.

Aerial baiting efficacy trials are currently being conducted by the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI), to determine a recommended rate of baits per kilometre. AWI is contributing financial assistance to the trials. The results of the trials will result in a recommendation being made to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority on baiting rates.

1080 baits are not taken by koalas, however they can be taken by predators of native animals. Research conducted by the NSW DPI on the environmental impacts of baiting on native fauna populations has found that baiting can lead to an increase in the population of some native fauna. For example, where baiting has occurred, quoll populations have increased due to a reduction in their predator numbers.