

**RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT REFERENCES COMMITTEE****Question Number:** n/a**Division/Agency:** AgriFutures Australia**Topic:** *The adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness, in particular with respect to foot-and-mouth disease and varroa mite***Proof Hansard Page:** 30

**CHAIR:** To clarify, would we need to change legislation to allow the levy to be collected off people providing pollination services?

**Mr Smith:** I'm not aware of the legislative requirements in that space. Michael, are you aware of that? I can take that on notice.

**CHAIR:** If you could, take that on notice.

**ANSWER**

The National Honey Levy collects a flat cents per kilogram rate from honey producers. The levy is reliant on honey production but collects no revenue from pollination services. In response to a proposal from The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) in 2021, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment advised that a 'pollination levy does not 'fit within the current legal framework on imposing a levy on primary production'. AgriFutures Australia understands that the Department is working to streamline and modernise the agricultural levies and charges (levies) legislation. We look forward to the results of this review to determine whether a levy on pollination can be applied for using the Department's Levy Principles and Guidelines.

**RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT REFERENCES COMMITTEE****Wednesday, 12 October 2022****Newcastle****Question Number:** n/a**Division/Agency:** AgriFutures Australia**Topic:** *The adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness, in particular with respect to foot-and-mouth disease and varroa mite***Proof Hansard Page:** 30

**CHAIR:** I would respectfully suggest that there's at least the possibility—you would think at least a material possibility, if not a probability—that we do not eradicate it. So maybe you could take on notice, too, what steps you're taking to get prepared for such a situation and at least to kickstart this research ASAP. Is that okay?

**Ms Olthof:** Yes, certainly.

Answer:

AgriFutures Australia is currently contracting a project *Varroa Destructor – what do we know, what can we learn from others and where are the knowledge gaps?* The aim of this project is to provide AgriFutures Australia and the beekeeping industry with an understanding of what research has been conducted across the world on varroa that would have relevance in the Australian setting.

**RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT REFERENCES COMMITTEE****Question Number:** n/a**Division/Agency:** AgriFutures Australia**Topic:** *The adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness, in particular with respect to foot-and-mouth disease and varroa mite***Proof Hansard Page:** 30

**Senator WHISH-WILSON:** You mention in your submission that your investment would assist the agricultural industry with its ability to adapt to challenges through enhanced threat detection capabilities, risk management, process automation and operational efficiencies. We've heard from apiarists, or the bee industry, on the ground today that one of the issues that's arisen is a lack of training—that there's a lack of qualified people and a heavy reliance on volunteers to assist—in the biosecurity protocols. Is that something you've been aware of, for example, for the Cert III in NSW or the SQR system in Victoria? Are you involved in any training or in putting together courses for development in that area?

**Mr Smith:** I might hand over to Amanda Olthof to respond to that question.

**Ms Olthof:** AgriFutures has been involved in the Australian honeybee industry via the development of a security code of practice, and various programs, but the training for anyone involved in a response is done by Plant Health Australia.

**Senator WHISH-WILSON:** I was just wondering if you had any kind of research input into that.

**Ms Olthof:** No, not that I'm aware of, but I can take that on notice.

**ANSWER**

AgriFutures Australia is not involved in any biosecurity training for individuals involved in a biosecurity response or in developing courses in this area.

AgriFutures project *Improving biosecurity resources and better understanding bee health in Australia* published in 2021, showed the honey bee biosecurity set of measures designed to protect against the entry and spread of pests and diseases within an apiary.

*The adoption of on-farm biosecurity sensing technologies in select small and emerging industries* project which finished in 2021 profiled several candidate technologies with the potential to address honey bee biosecurity threats and identified several potential technologies for consideration by beekeepers.

In 2013, RIRDC contracted Plant Health Australia to develop *The Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice*. The resulting Code of Practice was published in 2016.