

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Budget Estimates Hearing 2013-14  
3 and 4 June 2013

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION (CSIRO)

**TOPIC:** Chiswick station

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard, 3 June 2013, pages 28 and 29)

**QUESTION No.:** BI-13

**Senator JOYCE:** On Anthelmintic resistance and the work at Chiswick in CSIRO Armidale, what work is currently under progress with worm resistance at CSIRO? How are your staffing levels going at CSIRO Chiswick?

**Dr Clark:** In terms of an update on the parasitology work in general, which is work that is undertaken at Chiswick for both the beef and sheep industry, I would prefer to take that on notice to provide you the detail around all of the work that we are doing. Would you be comfortable with that?

**Senator JOYCE:** What I want to know is that our work going forward at Chiswick means that Chiswick is in no way under threat or anything like that?

**Dr Clark:** One of the things we have done in partnership with the University of New England is to develop their work on animal genomics and animal research and put that together with what we are doing and with our field stations to build a centre of global significance in Armidale. That has been additionally supported by the investment we have recently seen into the University of New England. I will see CSIRO putting some of our staff directly into the university and making our facilities and research available to that partnership. Our joint vision is that this will raise the work that we are doing in Armidale and the work that the University of New England is doing by putting the best that we have with the best of the university to national and global importance. It is a very important area for us and consistent with making our regional centres vibrant. It requires that level of collaboration and partnership.

**Senator JOYCE:** And the budget funding into Chiswick allows that?

**Dr Clark:** Yes. Chiswick provides into that partnership the strength of the work that we do in a number of areas around animal health: the work we are doing with sheep, and flystrike, for example; the work we are doing with cattle; and the work that we are now doing for the poultry industry. It also provides the use of our field stations, which are vital to the university.

**Senator JOYCE:** So there is no threat to Chiswick?

**Dr Clark:** There is certainly no threat to the work we are doing at Armidale. We are investing increasingly in that area.

**Senator JOYCE:** I know there is no threat to Armidale—to the work of the university—but what about to the actual Chiswick station, the research farm at Chiswick? Is there any threat to that?

**Dr Clark:** We have a number of field areas that we are looking to contribute as part of that partnership.

**Senator JOYCE:** Is Chiswick under threat?

**Dr Clark:** Senator, let me provide for you on notice how we are intending to bring our field stations to bear on that partnership and how we are looking to bring all of those together. Can I provide that on notice for all of the field stations? The reason I say that I was recently in Armidale

and met with the University of New England and we are looking at how we use those field stations and what contribute. So I can provide you.

**Senator JOYCE:** Dr Clark, you are leaving it up in the air. **Dr Clark:** No, I am not leaving it up in the air. I simply want to provide you with the most accurate information on the field stations and what we are providing into that. Also, as I said, I was recently in Armidale to have discussions with the vice-chancellor and vice-chancellor of research, the head of research, of the university, in terms of what the needs are going to be around our field stations. My understanding is that there is going to be greater need for our field stations, so I would prefer all of that in detail to you.

**Senator JOYCE:** When would we get that, Dr Clark?

**Dr Clark:** We will provide that as a question on notice.

**Senator JOYCE:** So you cannot give an assurance that Chiswick is not going to be affected and not going to be downgraded?

**Dr Clark:** What I can give you an assurance of, and which I have given you an assurance of, is that the use of our field stations is a vital part of our partnership with UNE. I have given you assurance that we have had increased funding into that area and that our contribution of our field station work is a pivotal part of what we are doing to build Armidale up. I should leave you in no doubt that the area of animal genomics, the area of the work that we are doing, for all of those industries is an area that we are looking to consolidate and put on both the global and national stages.

**Senator JOYCE:** So you cannot give an assurance that Chiswick is not going to be downgraded? What you are saying is that your field stations still have an important role but you are, for a direct purpose, not discussing Chiswick, so that issue is remaining in the air, as to what is going to happen to that.

**Dr Clark:** I have answered your question, Senator. I will provide that on notice.

**Senator JOYCE:** You have; you definitely have.

## **ANSWER**

CSIRO has, and continues to develop markers and tests for anthelmintic resistance. The research remains a priority for CSIRO.

CSIRO has reviewed its work in livestock parasitology and adjusted the size of the capability to reflect funding availability for research in relation to biosecurity and animal production systems. As a result, staff at CSIRO's Chiswick site will be reduced by four to five positions. Of those, two positions are in the parasitology area.

CSIRO has no plans to close the Chiswick site.