

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2014

Agriculture

Question: 25

Division/Agency: Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

Topic: Registered agvet chemicals products in Australia

Proof Hansard page: 73 (29/05/2014)

Senator LINES asked:

Senator LINES: Just some numbers first. Can you provide information on the number of registered agvet chemical products in Australia, please?

Ms Arthy: Around about 10,000—I can come back by the time we are finished here with the exact number.

Senator LINES: That would be fabulous, thank you. And also information on the number of active constituents or chemicals approved for use in Australia?

Ms Arthy: I will find that out for you shortly and come back to you.

Answer:

As at 10 June 2014, the total number of registered agvet chemicals in Australia is 11 947 (Ag 8526, Vet 3421), and the total number of active constituents approved for use in Australia is 2267.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture

Question: 26

Division/Agency: Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

Topic: Applications received for registrations of agvet chemicals

Proof Hansard page: 73 (29/05/2014)

Senator LINES asked:

Senator LINES: Lovely. How many applications has APVMA received for registrations of agvet chemicals for both pesticides and veterinary chemicals—maybe Senator Back knows the answer to this—for 2013-14 to date.

Ms Arthy: 2013-14? I will come back to you with the exact number, but it is around the 3,000 mark.

Answer:

As at 31 May 2014 the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority has received 2760 registrations of agvet chemicals (Ag 1702, Vet 938 and active constituents 120).

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Agriculture

Question: 27

Division/Agency: Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

Topic: Applications received for permits to use chemicals

Proof Hansard page: 73 (29/05/2014)

Senator LINES asked:

Senator LINES: Right. How many applications has APVMA received for permits to use chemicals other than for which the chemical is registered over 2013-14 to date? The period from 2013 up to now.

Ms Arthy: It is around about 600 to 700 a year but, again, we will have the exact numbers to you shortly.

Answer:

As at 31 May 2014 the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority has received 567 applications for permits to use chemicals (Ag 411, Vet 156).

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Agriculture

Question: 28

Division/Agency: Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

Topic: Total number of staff working on implementation of new legislation

Proof Hansard page: 73 (29/05/2014)

Senator LINES asked:

Senator LINES: You said you had 21 non-ongoing and you said they were mostly working on the implementation. So is that the total number of staff on the new legislation—on the implementation?

Ms Arthy: I would have to come back to you with the exact split. Most of them would be, but we do carry some to work in our more administrative area—administrative assistants—but if you wish, I can come back to you with an exact split.

Answer:

There are 21 resources in non-ongoing (temporary) roles specifically focussed on legislative reform implementation requirements. These roles are occupied by a mix of ongoing and non-ongoing staff and external contractors, and will cease to exist once implementation is complete.

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Question: 29

Division/Agency: Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

Topic: Herbicide, Sempra, halosulfuron-methyl

Proof Hansard page: 77 (29/05/2014)

Senator BACK asked:

Senator BACK: The information I have is that there is a selective herbicide, whose trade name is Sempra, halosulfuron-methyl, which apparently Biosecurity Queensland has identified as 'highly effective, selective', but it has not been registered. Can that herbicide be added to your off-label permit for local authorities and is there anything further that you can provide my colleague Senator Macdonald? He is the person who has asked me to raise this with you.

Dr Bhula: We will take that question on notice. We have issued a range of permits for general weed control. As I said earlier, because we have not been able to find that particular sedge, at this stage we are not entirely sure whether it is covered under one of those general herbicide permits. We will take that question on notice.

Answer:

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) confirms that as at 17 June 2014 there are no permits in place for the use of halosulfuron-methyl Sempra Herbicide and no applications for a permit to be issued.

If the APVMA receives an application for a permit for use of halosulfuron-methyl Sempra Herbicide it will be assessed in accordance with the statutory criteria for safety, efficacy and trade under the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994*.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2014

Agriculture

Question: 30

Division/Agency: Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

Topic: Honey bee industry committee

Proof Hansard page: 79 (29/05/2014)

Senator XENOPHON asked:

Senator XENOPHON: It is a very important report. A number of recommendations were made, I think it is fair to say, about the health of the honey bee population and its broader implications for agriculture. The recommends in this report seem sound and contain good advice in collecting further information. Has the APVMA had any response from government or industry to the recommendations? This is something I might ask Senator Colbeck to put on notice as well.

Dr Bhula: Not at this point in time. We have been in discussion with the various groups that were involved as part of the writing of that report. We will proceed with looking at how those recommendations might be fulfilled, whether they are done through industry commitment; through the AHBIC, the honey bee industry committee; or through other means, as well as states and territories.

Senator Colbeck: I am happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

The following recommendations were made in Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority's (APVMA) overview report, *Neonicotinoids and the Health of Honey Bees in Australia*, published on 19 February 2014 (www.apvma.gov.au/news_media/chemicals/bee_and_neonicotinoids.php).

While not directly responsible for the implementation of many of the recommendations, the APVMA has attempted to summarise their current status.

Recommendation 15.1.1: *CropLife Australia could consider working together with relevant member companies to develop a best-management practice guide relevant to Australia and focussing on those industries where there is the potential for neonicotinoid dusts to be generated during the process of coating, transporting and planting of treated seeds. This may require liaison with relevant agricultural machinery manufacturers as well seed-treatment facilities and with agricultural commodity groups.*

Question: 30 (continued)

CropLife Australia, in consultation with the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) and National and State farmer organisations, has made significant progress on the development of a best-management-practice guide for people handling treated seed. The guide will provide best management practices to reduce the potential for neonicotinoid dust to be generated during seed treatment, seed transport, seed handling and planting, cleaning of seed-handling equipment, and disposal of unused seed and seed packaging. It is expected that this guide will be published and widely distributed before the end of 2014.

Recommendation 15.1.2: *AHBIC and its member associations could consider the feasibility of trialling an annual survey of apiarists in the different states/territories and agricultural/horticultural regions on the health of their hives. This information would then be collated into a national report, with assistance from the Department of Agriculture, RIRDC and/or state/territory agriculture departments, as appropriate. (The possibility of extending the survey to farmers and horticulturalists growing crops dependent on insect pollinators for production could be considered, depending on the outcomes of a 2-3-year trial of the survey of apiarists.)*

Mr Trevor Weatherhead, Executive Director of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC), advised the APVMA that this recommendation has been set down for discussion under general business at the forthcoming AGM of AHBIC which will be held in Melbourne on 9 July 2014.

Recommendation 15.1.4: *Relevant agencies (eg. RIRDC, Plant Health Australia, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Environment) should consider holding a one-day symposium for a wide range of stakeholders to hear about issues relating to bee health from Australian and international experts. This would also provide an opportunity for the APVMA to provide a report of its overview of neonicotinoid insecticides and pollinator health, as well as a summary of the outcomes of the July 2013 workshop for regulatory stakeholders.*

A national symposium was held in Canberra on Wednesday 9 April 2014; it was organised by Plant Health Australia with program input from the APVMA and jointly funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, the Grains Research and Development Corporation and the APVMA (www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/experts-come-together-to-consider-pesticide-risks-to-honey-bees). A report arising from the symposium is available at www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/about-us/events/neonicotinoids-and-other-insecticides/; copies of speaker presentations are also available on this website.