

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2014

**Agriculture**

**Question:** 43

**Division/Agency:** Australian Chief Plant Protection Office

**Topic:** Banana freckle

**Proof Hansard page:** 121

**Senator STERLE asked:**

**Senator STERLE:** So there has been a decision, because you have an eradication plan. You made it very clear, Mr Ritman, that you are going to pull up all the banana trees in Darwin and now on the Tiwi Islands. You said that you chair it and that you have been working with the banana growers' association and grower groups. So how long are these poor devils going to be without any income? By the time it is all ripped up in Darwin, then there is a period where you said it is host-free or no-host—I do not know how long that is, how long is that? Two years? Five years?

**Dr Ritman:** It goes by season.

**Senator STERLE:** How many seasons?

**Dr Ritman:** It is over a period of two years, but I will have to take that on notice for the exact time.

**Answer:**

Three seasons.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

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Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2014

**Agriculture**

**Question:** 44

**Division/Agency:** Australian Chief Plant Protection Office

**Topic:** Compensation due to banana freckle

**Proof Hansard page:** 121

**The CHAIR asked:**

**CHAIR:** Will the compensation be adequate as if they still had a crop? Will it match that?

**Dr Ritman:** I will have to take that on notice.

**Answer:**

Yes. The main objective in providing Owner Reimbursement Costs (ORC) is to provide incentives for growers to report suspicious pests or pathogens under the basic principle of no one being worse off or better off as a result of reporting a suspected exotic pest. A companion objective is to provide social justice to those growers who, through no fault of their own, are seriously affected by a Response Plan to eradicate an exotic pest.

Under the general guidelines of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed, ORC may relate to: direct eradication costs incurred by the owner that are additional to ordinary operating costs; the value of crops destroyed; and costs and losses resulting from an order being given that a property lie fallow for a period due to a Response Plan for the purpose of eradication.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2014

**Agriculture**

**Question:** 45

**Division/Agency:** Australian Chief Plant Protection Office

**Topic:** Remuneration package

**Proof Hansard page:** 122

**Senator STERLE asked:**

**Senator STERLE:** You cannot tell us, but can the department take it on notice? Can we see what the remuneration package was, or the compensation for the growers? I just have one more. I have gone off freckle, and I want to talk about cucumber green mottle mosaic virus. What can you tell me about the work you are doing in Darwin, or the Northern Territory, about that disease?

**Answer:**

Under the National Banana Freckle Eradication Program Response Plan the total indicative budget for Owner Reimbursement Costs (ORCs) is \$3.95 million and is subject to an independent assessment of each eligible commercial banana farm and production nursery affected, in accordance with the *ORC Evidence Framework for the Australian Banana Industry* and the *ORC Evidence Framework for the Nursery Production Industry*.

In relation to cucumber green mottle mosaic virus (CGMMV), the department:

- is working with the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests and the National Management Group, to finalise the draft Response Plan for Emergency Containment of CGMMV in the Northern Territory (NT)
- has facilitated the deployment of a specialist team to assist the NT Government
- is working to ensure that there is good communication between the melon industry, the NT and other stakeholders
- has reviewed import conditions for cucurbit germ plasm
- is taking steps to minimise the potential impact of the occurrence of CGMMV on exports of watermelons from Australia
- is certifying product for export as normal, excluding gazetted quarantine areas, based on advice from the NT Government

**Question:** 45 (continued)

- is working closely with our overseas posts and trading partners should any market access issues arise
- has notified the International Plant Protection Convention of the incursion as required under Australia's international obligations.