

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2010-11
31 May 2010

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Calicivirus

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 31 May 2010, E26)

QUESTION No.: BI-16

Senator McGAURAN—I would like an update on calicivirus. Where has it been released? Will it also face research cutbacks? Minister, I noticed you said the overall budget had increased 2.6 per cent.....

Dr Clark—It has been some time since we were doing active research on the calicivirus, but I would be very comfortable taking that question on notice.

Senator McGAURAN—The program for the release of the calicivirus is still being undertaken. Who undertakes that? It is the local state agriculture departments, I suspect.

Dr Clark—I will have to take that on notice. It is certainly not CSIRO. We will have to provide you with the information about which state and relevant authorities are doing that.

ANSWER

The monitoring of Rabbit Calicivirus Disease (RCD) is carried out at State Government level. CSIRO does not conduct systematic and regular monitoring of RCD activity but CSIRO currently conducts RCD research in three areas:

- CSIRO is conducting research in collaboration with the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) into a benign relative of RCD that has been found to naturally occur in wild Australian rabbits to determine what, if any implications there are for the effectiveness of RCD of this naturally occurring strain.
- CSIRO is working in collaboration the NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Invasive Animals CRC, on a 'Caring for our Country' funded project to determine if there is a scientific justification for considering the release of additional calicivirus strains, in order to 'boost' the effectiveness of RDC.
- A postdoctoral project is being undertaken to study the molecular structure of RCD to better understand the mechanism by which RCD is fatal to infected rabbits.