



Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture
and Water Resources**

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry

Inquiry into Agricultural Innovation

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
Supplementary Submission

Further information in response to discussion with the Committee on 12 November 2015.

On Thursday 13 August 2015, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry (the committee) adopted an inquiry referred by the then Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP, asking the Committee to inquire into and report on the role of technology in increasing agricultural productivity in Australia.

Officials from the department gave evidence to the committee on 12 November 2016 and undertook to supply further information in relation to two matters.

[Bluetongue research](#) (Hansard page 5)

Ms Landry raised the issue of Bluetongue virus, and Mr Glyde undertook to provide further information.

Bluetongue is endemic over much of northern and parts of south eastern Australia. The distribution of the virus is determined by the presence of the biting midge insects (Culicoides) that transmit the disease. Cool dry conditions do not support survival of the insect that transmits bluetongue virus so there are large areas of southern Australia free from the virus. Eradication of bluetongue would be difficult if not impossible due to the ubiquitous nature of the Culicoides vectors in northern Australia.

Industries and governments jointly fund a monitoring program for bluetongue virus - the National Arbovirus Monitoring Program. One of the prime objectives of this program is to identify areas in Australia free from bluetongue virus transmission to support trade with countries that do not want to risk introduction of bluetongue viruses, particularly as a result of trade in live ruminants (cattle, sheep and goats).

[Water related research](#) (Hansard page 7)

The committee Chair, Mr Ramsey, raised some issues about water use efficiency in irrigated agriculture, and asked whether there was somebody the Committee could speak with.

The department suggests Irrigation Australia Limited is best placed to provide the requested advice. Irrigation Australia Limited is the peak national organisation representing the Australian irrigation industry, from water users, consultants, designers and installers through to educational institutions, government, manufacturers and retailers.

Government engagement in research on water use in agriculture across the Australian, state and Northern Territory governments is co-ordinated through the 'Water Use in Agriculture Research, Development and Extension Strategy' adopted under the National Primary Industries Research, Development and Extension Framework. The coordinator of the strategy is Dr Guy Roth.