

to the committee,

Learnings of Varroa mite in managing red imported fire ants:

Mites are notoriously difficult to treat. Chemical acaricides tend to have poor efficacy. The only effective solution is bonfires. As a livestock parasite, it presents a very different target. A single female can destroy a colony due to their ability of arrhenotokous parthenogenesis. She will give virgin birth to sons that she mates with in order to produce daughters. Methods for containing varroa mite have reportedly been largely ineffective with its presence expected to persist, "ALERT: As of 19 September 2023, the National Management Group (NMG) as peak decision body for the National Varroa mite Emergency Response have reached a decision to shift the focus of the response from eradication to transitioning to management of Varroa Mite."(DPI) Colonial ants have drastically different vulnerabilities.

Make it easier to obtain and lawfully use effective systemic pesticides. Imidacloprid is a good example.

Legislate emergency provisions permitting entry to inspect and fumigate commercial private property and construction sites.

Have DPI inspect estate construction sites. A good example is the recent estates to the south west and north east of the intersection of Park Ridge Road and Chambers Flat Road, Logan Reserve. Nearby to the east of Logan Reserve State School there is another hotspot. Another popup suburb development site, Brookhaven, is a cluster. South Ripley. Emergency entry provisions where a large earthworks site has become infested. Regulation for the movement of earthmoving equipment even over short distances within biosecurity zones. It could potentially be a matter of grading renders fireants more noticeable or grading has dispersed fireants or tradesmen are reporting fireants at work as obligated. Potentially introduce biosecurity protocols at construction sites.

A slight oversight in the Queensland Biosecurity Act 2014. Schedule 1: Part 8 includes *Solenopsis geminata* but does not include *S. Invicta*. The Queensland government lacks the authority to control the spread of fire ants within the biosecurity zones nor is anyone in Queensland obligated to control them. *S. Invicta* is Schedule 2, Category 1. This requires mandatory reporting but s42(5) is sort of vague. In contrast to explicitly stated requirements for other categories and schedules such as category 3 restricted matter that prohibits the distribution or disposal of the restricted matter or prohibited matter that may require the matter to be killed, such actions could arguably not be encompassed by the obligations under s42(5). Arguably due to DPI advisories not to attempt to kill the ants as it may increase their fecundity, attempting to kill the ants could be in violation of s42(5). The Fire Ant eradication plan largely just assumes that land owners will self-treat but there is no obligation to do so. So I suppose if you throw a shovel into the ground anywhere in the Brisbane greater area, fire ants will swarm the handle and it's unlawful to do anything about it.

potential mitigations for this limited response could be to redefine a targetted area as any confirmed infestation plus the surrounding properties in a given radius. This way resistance to pesticides can be reduced if someone ends up with one of those hippy neighbours that believes in living in harmony with nature or conversely That Guy that hits them with fly spray repeatedly so they swarm the neighbourhood.

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