

Submission No.56

Clark, Murray (Sen J. Watson)

From: Mark Sandeman [M.Sandeman@latrobe.edu.au]
Sent: Friday, 7 February 2003 5:23 PM
To: Watson, John (Senator)
Subject: Quarantine Report



Dear Senator Watson

Apologies for the slow reply but it took a little longer to find some hard information.

The situation in Canberra as I mentioned is that there is one parasitologist left but she is teaching straight biochemistry and molecular biology. The small undergraduate parasitology subject is taught by a casual teacher on a sessional basis. The parasitologist does take Honours and PhD students though they are few these days.

In Queensland the now Department of Microbiology and Parasitology has been reduced from 8 parasitologists to 3 over the last 5 years.

The Queensland museum recently lost one of its 2 parasitologists.

The Australian Society for Parasitology has only four parasitologists as members in Tasmania and only two in the Northern Territory despite the importance of these areas in quarantine for aquatic and veterinary/human diseases respectively.

The CSIRO has amalgamated the former CSIRO Divisions of Animal Health and Animal Production, and parts of Tropical Agriculture. This has resulted in a large scale loss of staff and the loss of laboratories in Sydney and Melbourne. In particular the movement of the McMaster laboratory to Armidale has resulted in a serious loss of parasitological expertise.

There is particular concern with our remaining expertise in aquatic diseases with only 4 scientists in Australia expert in the area of molluscan diseases.

These few examples of the loss of our expertise is only a small part of the whole situation with the lack of undergraduate and higher degree training in the areas of parasitology to become critical over the next 10 years as the current academics and researchers retire. A personal example is that of the 22 higher degree students I have trained over the last 20 years only 3 are working in parasitology.

I hope this helps but I will try and update the list as more information trickles in.

Mark Sandeman

Head of Agricultural Sciences
School of Life Sciences
La Trobe University
Vic 3086

Ph 61 3 94792164
Fax 61 3 9471 0224