

The Committee Secretary
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to enquire as to whether there is still scope to bring issues to the Committees attention with its "Inquiry into the impact on Agriculture of pest animals"?

Specifically I would like to raise the issue of the European Wasp (*Vespula Germanica*) which I believe is a seriously underrated threat to agriculture and which also could have a devastating effect on biodiversity and indirectly disrupt the functioning of ecosystems. Additionally there are OHAS issues associated for rural workers.

I believe that the European Wasp has been considered a problem of urban areas but over recent years, and more rapidly since the 2003 fires, there has been a dramatic spread of these pests on parts of the Monaro in NSW and through the Australian Alps into Victoria.

Wasps feed on insects, dead animals as well as fruit and vegetables. They can and do attack humans and domestic animals. I have observed wild animals being attacked by a swarm of wasps. I have not observed an honey bees around our house since the wasps arrived.

Given the wasps ability to move and feed over significant distances, control is beyond the scope of an individual and it requires a coordinated national approach to their control and eradication. I believe that some States have undertaken research but I am unaware of any serious efforts in NSW to control these pests particularly on Crown lands such as National Parks. On private lands it is apparently the responsibility of the landholder to undertake this control work.

Enquiries with the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, the NSW Department of Primary Industries and our neighbours have not provided any encouragement that a solution or even cost effective control is available or even being sought.

Yours sincerely

Craig Allen