

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Additional Estimates Hearing 2011-12  
15 February 2012

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

**TOPIC:** Merbein Facility

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard, 15 February 2012, page.7)

**QUESTION No.:** AI-3

**Senator McKENZIE:** My questions go to a report on 8 February around the Merbein CSIRO facility in Mildura and the National Irrigators Council's claims around that. I am wondering if you can comment on where the research capacity from that facility has ended up? I know table and wine grape research has gone down to Adelaide, but what about the citrus et cetera?

**Dr Clark:** We have moved some of the scientific activity to Adelaide. We have also retained, for a short time, the citrus breeding activity. We have also maintained a growing facility where we can do citrus testing, et cetera. So we have maintained some land to be able to do that. Our field testing site, if you like, has been maintained.

**Senator McKENZIE:** The Mallee soil structure et cetera is specific to that sort of research. Does that capacity still exist within Sunraysia?

**Dr Clark:** I would take the question on notice with regard to the Mallee soils. Our soils work is in Adelaide, but I would have to take any movement of that activity from Merbein to Adelaide on notice.

**ANSWER**

When the Merbein facility was operational, the majority of research work was conducted on growers properties in order to ensure the most realistic environment. As a consequence, CSIRO has always had access to a wide range of land with differing soil types. One of the decisions taken in determining the physical placement of experiments is the appropriateness of the soils. CSIRO's Koorlong facility, which is situated approximately seven km from the former Merbein site, is based on typical Mallee soils and will continue to be used for viticulture work