

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2011-12
19 October 2011

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: CSIRO PLANT INDUSTRY

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 19 October 2011, page 10).

QUESTION No.: SI-9

Senator XENOPHON: Can you take on notice—unless you know now—how much money in total CSIRO Plant Industry is spending on R&D for genetically modified crops?

Mr Whelan: I would have to take that on notice.

Senator XENOPHON: And the contrast with organic and biological organic—

Mr Whelan: We will do GM and other. How about that?

Senator XENOPHON: Okay, GM and other

ANSWER

Between CSIRO Plant Industry and the Food Futures Flagship the total expenditure in 2010-11 on R&D for genetically modified crops is approximately \$14.5 million. This work includes work in wheat and barley on starch functionality and nutrient use efficiency, in cotton around fibre development; and into the feasibility of using plants as sources of renewable industrial chemical feedstocks.

With regard to non-GM R&D, CSIRO Plant Industry carries out significant activities within its own research portfolio as well as through the deployment of staff expertise and capability into the Sustainable Agriculture Flagship, a Biodiversity portfolio, the Climate Adaptation Flagship and the Water for a Healthy Country Flagship. The total cost of employing those Plant Industry staff in 2010-11 was approximately \$17 million. Across CSIRO as a whole there is considerably more invested in sustainability issues. For example, the expenditure on Sustainable Agriculture Flagship activities is budgeted to be approximately \$65 million for 2011-12 and other relevant work is also undertaken in our water and environment research areas.