

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2013

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 53

Division/Agency: Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics and Sciences

Topic: Wild Dog Management in Australia

Proof Hansard page: 18

Senator BACK asked:

Senator BACK: I am glad you did! Mr Morris, I take you to your planned biosecurity deliverables 2012-13, under which one of your projects is 'wild dog management in Australia—a landscape approach', as you describe it. You would be aware now of the enormous impact of wild dogs in our sheep and goat industries and increasingly in our cattle industry. Also, I recently had feedback on our native

animal species being attacked in pastoral areas in WA. Can you tell me where you are with progress in examining the impediments that exist to appropriate wild dog management?

Mr Morris: You may be aware that ABARES administers, on behalf of the department, the Australian Pest Animal Research Program—APARP—and has been doing that for a number of years. Under that program there is quite a number of projects funded on wild dog management, including quite a number on appropriate control measures and that sort of thing. For the projects that are completed, there is information on our website, which goes into quite a bit of detail on the impacts of wild dogs and potential control measures. So, that is the main area of our work. We have also done a bit of work ourselves. Unfortunately I do not have a whole lot of detail in front of me on where that work is up to, but I am happy to take that on notice and give you more detail later on.

Answer:

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) is currently undertaking a project 'Wild dog management in Australia—a landscape approach including people, pests and place' for Australian Wool Innovation. The project examines the impediments that exist to appropriate wild dog management, and the consequences of ineffective wild dog management. The project is scheduled for completion in August 2014.

ABARES is also completing a project on the returns on investment in wild dog management. The project is integrating economic, social and environmental impacts of wild dogs into a cost-benefit analysis framework. The output from this project, scheduled for publication before 30 June 2013, can be used to inform prioritisation of future investment in wild dog management.

ABARES administers, on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Australian Pest Animal Research Program (APARP). Since 2008, APARP has provided more than \$1.3 million in funding towards research into wild dogs in Australia. A list of APARP projects was tabled on the day of the hearing.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 54

Division/Agency: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences

Topic: Risk Assessments of Biosecurity Projects

Proof Hansard page: 18

Senator BACK asked:

Senator BACK: I am particularly interested to know what programs, if any, involve cooperative funding between the Commonwealth and the states. I would also appreciate it if, in providing that on notice, you have any observations or recommendations in terms of management of national parks and public lands. The overwhelming evidence coming to us—I learnt this this morning from New South Wales, and I know it well in relation to the pastoral areas of Western Australia—is that whatever efforts farmers or pastoralists themselves are making on their land are as nil, because the equivalent work is not being undertaken in national parks and other areas. So, if you could do that I would be appreciative.

Also, if time does not permit, perhaps you could also take on notice what progress you may have been making with regard to the social and economic impacts of a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak—whether you have any updated information on that. Finally, I notice you are also doing some work on rabies risk assessment. Knowing now that we seem to have a fairly significant incidence of rabies in Bali in monkey populations and dog populations, and given the number of Australians visiting Bali and being bitten, I was wondering whether you have any advice for us in terms of where you might have been in that particular project as well.

Mr Morris: Certainly we have a number of projects underway for the biosecurity area of the department, which is doing risk assessments of potential outbreaks of a range of different pests and diseases. So it is a relatively new area for ABARES, starting to get into those risk assessments. We have done quite a bit of work on foot-and-mouth disease, and I am happy to provide you with that information.

Answer:

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) is aware that the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre involves cooperative funding between the Commonwealth, the states and industry, to continue the discovery and delivery of world-leading controls for invasive animals that are humane, cost-efficient and ecologically appropriate. The Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre website (www.invasiveanimals.com) can provide further information about this program of research.

ABARES current work on ‘Wild dog management in Australia—a landscape approach including people, pests and place’ is addressing the importance of public and private stakeholders working together to improve wild dog management in Australia. As noted in response to question on notice 53.

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Question: 54 (continued)

ABARES is conducting an analysis of the potential impacts of a foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak in Australia. This project aims to evaluate the potential economic and social costs to Australia of a hypothetical FMD outbreak to provide input into future investment strategies. The effects of stamping out and vaccination to eradicate small and large hypothetical outbreaks of FMD are being examined. The costs of eradicating the disease, the effects on producers and on the Australian economy of trade restrictions by trading partners are being evaluated. The potential social effects of an FMD outbreak are being evaluated through a literature review and discussions with focus groups to capture a range of stakeholders likely to be affected in the event of an outbreak. This study is expected to be completed in mid 2013.

ABARES is collaborating with the University of Sydney on a project funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) defining the risk pathways for the spread of rabies in eastern Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and northern Australia. The project assesses the risk of rabies spread via one or more pathways and identified data gaps in the risk assessment of regional rabies spread. The project also evaluates rabies surveillance methods and aims to develop and apply qualitative or quantitative risk analysis methods. ABARES has provided a report identifying the range of potential spread pathways to the project and is assisting with the development of a risk analysis model. The project report is scheduled for completion at the end of 2013.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 55

Division/Agency: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences

Topic: Hazard Reduction and Encroachment of National Parks on Agricultural Land

Proof Hansard page: 33

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN: In the advice that you give, have you bothered to do a cost-benefit analysis on the agricultural side following the recent phenomenon of seriously hot fires which completely destroy the landscape. You cannot put stock in to reduce the fuel load and you have not got the resources to do cold burns in any proportion that is required? Have you bothered to figure out, which any person with half a brain could figure out, what happens when a hot fire goes through? If you go on the road in the Snowy from Adaminaby to Talbingo, you will see whole valleys of mountain ash stone dead, like bloody graveyards. Do you give advice that says perhaps we ought to consider other options and advice on why fires are getting bigger when the gear is getting better? It is almost like football now: fires are a TV event with a helicopter, with half the water they drop evaporating before it hits the ground. Also, have you done a cost-benefit analysis on the encroachment on agricultural land of national parks that have now become a breeding ground for dogs and pigs. As Senator Back and others would know, wild dogs have become a serious problem—

Senator Ludwig: I do not mean to interrupt the flow. I know time is precious. I would like maybe one question followed by another question followed by another question, so the officer at the table can respond.

Senator HEFFERNAN: Because Senator Rhiannon is having kittens, perhaps you could take that on notice or give a brief answer. Have you done a cost-benefit analysis?

Mr Tucker: Not to our knowledge. We will have to check with our ABARES colleagues.

Answer:

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) has not undertaken a cost-benefit analysis on the agricultural impact or size of recent fires.

ABARES is completing a project on the returns on investment in wild dog management. The project integrates economic, social and environmental impacts of wild dogs into a cost-benefit analysis framework for case studies in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland. The output from this project, scheduled for publication mid 2013, can be used to inform prioritisation of future investment in wild dog management.

ABARES is not undertaking any cost-benefit analysis on wild pig management.

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Question: 56

Division/Agency: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences

Topic: Figure on the Gulf for Northern Prawn Fishery

Proof Hansard page: 78-79

Senator MACDONALD asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD: You are saying that there is \$0.4 million worth of fish that will no longer be caught—that is \$400,000 worth of fish. Do you have that in tonnes at all?

Dr Stobutzki: I should have it in tonnes; I might have to—

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Doctor, I think we are going to run out of time, so perhaps if you could take it on notice. What is your figure on the gulf for northern prawn? Did you do grey mackerel fishery as well?

Dr Stobutzki: We did. The northern prawn displacement in the north marine region was up to \$2.08 million. In terms of the joint authority fishery, I might take that one on notice because I am not sure if it was released. Given the number of operators, it might be confidential.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: To make that publicly available, what do you need? Authority from the operators to tell us. I am quite sure none of the operators would mind the public knowing just what the impact of this bioregional zone is going to have on their fishery. It is not a question of their income.

Dr Stobutzki: All these estimate are available in the ABARES's reports that can be obtained from the ABARES's website or the department of environment' website, SEWPaC. The Northern Territory offshore net and line fishery, which I think is the joint authority—

Senator IAN MACDONALD: No.

Dr Stobutzki: So it is not that one.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: It is round a bit further, I think.

Dr Stobutzki: My apologies; but I will check to see whether we released those.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Could you give me all those details, please. You would interpret them better than me. I want to be clear: what you were doing was working out the money value of the fisheries product that will no longer be taken from those fisheries as a result of the bioregional marine plans—is that correct?

Dr Stobutzki: Yes. The direct displaced GVP.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Were you just there to find a monetary assessment, a volume assessment, or were you looking at the impact on the long-term future of the fish stock?

Dr Stobutzki: The focus is more on the displaced catch, not the long-term future of the fish stock, but there was work done on the impact of that displaced catch back on to home ports and a social and economic survey.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: That is ABARES' work, is it? Not SEWPaC's?

Dr Stobutzki: Yes.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Is that all in the same report?

Dr Stobutzki: Yes, it is.

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Question: 56 (continued)

Senator IAN MACDONALD: If you can easily collate them for me, that would be helpful. Otherwise, if you give me the website I can do it myself, I guess. I would rather you do it. Do you or anyone from AFMA have a comment on the sustainability of the fish stocks without the marine bioregional planning and with the marine bioregional planning?

Answer:

Commonwealth Coral Sea Fishery

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) estimated that the final Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve would displace an estimated 87 tonnes from the Coral Sea Fishery (excluding the Aquarium Sector). This was based on historic fishing activity over the period 2001-2010. Due to the management and reporting arrangements for the Aquarium Sector, ABARES does not have complete data on the fishing activities or estimated gross value of production for this sector.

Source: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) 2012, *Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve: Social and economic assessment of the impacts on commercial and charter fishing. Report on the draft marine reserve, with a supplementary report for the final proposed marine reserve*. Report prepared for the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Canberra, June 2012

Grey mackerel fisheries in the Gulf of Carpentaria

Grey mackerel are targeted in the Gulf of Carpentaria by the Queensland N9 Fishery, Queensland Fisheries Joint Authority and the Northern Territory Offshore Net and Line Fishery. The estimates of displacement of catch by the final marine reserve network in the North Marine Region from these fisheries are confidential and cannot be released, because they are based on data from less than five vessels.

The reports from which these estimates have been summarised can be found at www.environment.gov.au/marinereserves/background.html. In addition, a summary report ('Final Commonwealth marine reserves network proposal: ABARES social and economic assessment') can be found at adl.brs.gov.au/data/warehouse/9aam/9aami2012/SEI2012.1MarineResNet_1.0.0.pdf

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Question: 57

Division/Agency: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences

Topic: Consultancy reports

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Is it correct that the consultancy “Development of methodology for socio-economic profiles for the forest and timber industry” has a start date of January 2012 and finish date as June 2014?

Is it the development of the methodology that is taking 30 months or is that the time frame for the overarching project?

Are there any interim results or outcomes from the Forest product statistics and modelling project?

What is the budget for that project?

Answer:

That statement is not correct.

The time frame for the overarching project is 30 months.

There are interim results available.

The work is co-funded by Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA) and the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES). Total planned investment for this project is \$1 292 274 over four years. Of this total, ABARES contribution amounts to \$463 392 and FWPA’s contribution is \$828 882.

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Question: 58

Division/Agency: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences

Topic: Carbon Tax

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Did ABARES examine the impact export red tape may have had on the negative attitude of vegetable growers have towards exporting?

What actions has the government undertaken to help Australia's vegetable growers' access international markets and to address their concerns that these markets are too difficult and time consuming to crack?

What actions is the government planning to undertake to help Australia's vegetable growers' access international markets and to address their concerns that these markets are too difficult and time consuming to crack?

Is ABARES planning to do any analysis of the effects of the carbon tax on fisheries, particularly high value, highly perishable products that use airfreight?

Answer:

1. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) has not specifically examined the impact of export red tape on the attitudes of vegetable growers towards exporting.
2. See response to question on notice 268.
3. See response to question on notice 268.
4. ABARES is not planning to analyse the effects of carbon pricing on fisheries.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 59

Division/Agency: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences

Topic: Wood Supply and MIS

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Does ABARES plan to investigate the impact of the collapse of the MIS and of companies like Gunns on timber supply?

If as stated in QON 66 (May 2012) “The full effects of the collapse of some MIS companies will not be known for another 10 years”, what actions are being taken to ensure that there is not a significant impact on wood supply in the medium to long term?

Answer:

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) does not intend to undertake an analysis on the specific impacts of the collapse of some Managed Investment Scheme (MIS) companies on timber supply. Subject to ongoing funding, ABARES will continue to publish annual plantation statistics that will include any ownership changes and reductions or increases in plantation areas, including plantations owned by MIS companies.

Some of the impacts of the collapse of MIS companies on timber supply have been documented in ABARES June 2012 report on Australia’s log supply 2010–54. The report forecasts log supply from Australian plantations to increase from 26 million cubic metres per year in 2010–2014, peak at 33 million cubic metres per year by 2030–34 period and decline to 30 million cubic metres per year by 2050–54. Log supply is forecast to increase over the medium to long term based on information provided by plantation owners and managers, including for some former MIS plantations purchased by institutional investors.

ABARES has not assessed or undertaken any work on what intervention or actions, if any, would be needed in relation to wood supply in the medium to long term, either regionally or nationally.

Reference:

Gavran, M, Frakes, I, Davey, S & Mahendrarajah, S, 2012, *Australia’s plantation log supply 2010–2054*, ABARES, Canberra, March.