

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2008

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: PIAPH 01

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Chemicals used on GE Crops

Hansard Page: 36 (26/005/08)

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT—You mentioned some work that is being done to develop some monitoring.

Mr Aldred—If you like, I can chase up. If you just give me a couple of questions, I will try to chase that up during the break.

Senator SIEWERT—What I am keen to know is whether you could tell us if there are specific chemicals being used for GE crops. There could well be some chemicals that are not specifically flagged for GE crops that are being used in GE crops. What I am keen to know is what level of use there actually is for GE crops. Obviously I am keen to know whether it is going up or down. There are claims made by the industry that it significantly reduces chemical use whereas there is other evidence to show that in fact it does not and that it increases it. So I am keen to know that information and if in fact that is being monitored by anybody.

Mr Aldred—Okay. I will chase that during the day and come back to you.

Answer:

Refer to PIAPH 03.

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Question: PIAPH 02

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Use of Chemicals

Hansard Page: 39-40 (26/05/08)

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT—So who does? How do we get an idea of what amount of chemicals are being used?

Mr Aldred—Senator, I think I have already said I will take that on notice and try to come back to you.

Senator SIEWERT—That is on GE related pesticides. But the broad question is—

Mr Aldred—I will expand the question to cover data on the use of chemicals.

Senator HEFFERNAN—Can I ask you—

Senator McGAURAN—Is it whether you do or what the quantity of use is? They are trying to find out the quantity?

Senator SIEWERT—All I want answers to are the questions.

Senator McGAURAN—The first part is you do not know whether you collect that data, so you have to take that part on notice.

Mr Aldred—I am not aware that anyone in DAFF collects that data. What I have said that I will do is chase up and find out if there is a system that, for example, through the state and territory governments we can access.

Senator McGAURAN—This is your department. This is your job. I may understand if you have not got the quantities on hand, but you would know whether you have that data or not or whether you collect it.

Mr Aldred—I do not know, and I have taken it on notice.

Answer:

Refer to PIAPH 03.

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Question: PIAPH 03

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Triazine Use

Hansard Page: 41-42 (26/05/08)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—I think a Victorian study into genetically modified canola suggests that there is 600 tonnes of triazine going into Australian farming systems annually. How would they get that figure?

Dr Bennet-Jenkins—I am not sure, I am sorry, Senator.

Senator O'BRIEN—I would be interested to see whether we can track the figure down. Obviously other articles indicate a very wide usage of triazine chemicals in the agriculture sector. I am keen to understand the breadth of its use. Clearly, 70 per cent of the conventional canola we grow is reliant on triazine chemicals in its cultivation. So I am interested to get an understanding of the use of this chemical in a farming context given the reliance of conventional canola, or at least a substantial amount of it, on triazine application.

Dr O'Connell—Senator, what we might do for you is to pull together work between both parts of the portfolio and anywhere else and see if we can provide you with a useful briefing.

Answer:

The figure quoted is more likely to represent an estimate of the possible reduction in triazine use that could be achieved annually by a combination of the adoption of genetically modified (GM) canola and minimum/reduced tillage farming practices, rather than the total amount of triazine going into Australian farming systems annually.

The study referred to appears to be the Review of the moratorium on genetically modified canola in Victoria (Victorian Department of Primary Industries, 2007), which is available on the Victorian Department of Primary Industries website. It puts forward a range of substantial indirect benefits from adopting GM technology, including reduced use of chemicals that are generally of a more toxic nature, with subsequent environmental and social benefits. The report states, as an example, that Norton (2003) estimates that a reduction of over 640 tonnes of triazine usage in broadacre farming in Australia could be achieved.

The University of Melbourne publication, Conservation Farming Systems and Canola (Dr Robert Norton, 2003), examines the potential impact of adopting GM canola on minimum and reduced tillage crops, particularly in drier areas. It estimates that the change from triazine tolerant (TT) canola to GM canola would result in an additional 43,000 hectares of canola under direct drilling, plus an additional 160,000 hectares due to expansion into drier areas. It would also be likely to reduce the use of triazines

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(atrazine and simazine) as TT canola areas decrease. Based on these changes, it estimates that TT canola areas would decline from 55% to 24% of the production area and that, on the basis of the past five years, this would result in the TT canola area declining by 316,000 hectares. Consequently, about 320 tonnes less of both atrazine and simazine would be used annually, hence an estimated total reduction in triazine use of 640 tonnes. The report suggests that triazines would be replaced by glyphosate and glufosinate-ammonium which are considered to have a lower environmental impact.

Another more recent University of Melbourne publication, Canola and Australian Farming Systems 2003-2007 (RM Norton and RT Roush), estimates that a combination of HT (herbicide tolerant), TT and IT (imidiazolinone tolerant) canola comprise about 75% of the Australian crop. With respect to triazine use, the report estimates that if half the current canola types grown were replaced with GM canola, the impact in Australia would be:

- 640 tonnes less triazine herbicide would be used each year;
- an extra 225,000 hectares of canola could be grown by direct drilling or minimum tillage;
- average national canola yields would increase from 1.17 to 1.28 tonnes/hectare (8%);
- an additional 200,000 hectares of canola could be grown in low rainfall regions;
- wheat production (in rotation) would increase by 80,000 tonnes on the additional canola area.

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Question: PIAPH 04

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Land Transport Animal Welfare

Hansard Page: 74-75 (26/05/08)

Senator Scullion asked:

Senator SCULLION—Are you working with the Transport Council or with the individuals that drive the trucks, given that in this particular environment you are trying to deal with the safety of the metabolism of two completely different animals; one is a human being and one is a cow?

Mr Aldred—Just to finish on the issue of cattle, we have not kicked off that process yet. I was envisaging that cattle husbandry was probably going to be the next cab off the rank. As to the land transport standards, yes, I can check the detail of the organisations involved. But certainly industry has been involved very much throughout the process. I think we have had something like 12 industry groups as part of the consultations. We have picked up seven animal groups. Certainly, there has been a high degree of industry involvement.

Answer:

Mr Luke Fraser, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Livestock Transporters Association (ALTA) was a member of the writing group that developed the original draft Land Transport Standards.

Mr Fraser and other ALTA members have attended Standards Reference Group (SRG) meetings which provided a forum for those transporting livestock to raise concerns.

The SRG was co-ordinated by Animal Health Australia and includes representatives from a broad range of industries including saleyards, stock agents, livestock industries, all levels of government and community groups.

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Question: PIAPH 05

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Animal Welfare

Hansard Page: 78 (26/05/08)

Senator McGauran asked:

Senator McGAURAN—Dr Wirth said that those organisations will now target the embassies. Do you take that seriously? Have you asked Dr Hugh Wirth what he meant by ‘targeting the embassies’?

Senator Sherry—That is probably a question for foreign affairs. They might have a greater knowledge of the targeting of embassies.

Senator McGAURAN—He has done it on the grounds that—

Senator Sherry—You have not been this active since you left the National Party. I am really impressed at the level of questions and diligence and enthusiasm you are showing here.

CHAIR—Order! We might have to utilise our dinner break to bring out the boxing gloves.

Senator Sherry—I never feel that way about Senator McGauran.

CHAIR—Point made, Minister.

Senator Sherry—I apologise, chair. Some of the officers may have knowledge about targeting of embassies, but if they do not I will happily take it on notice and check with Mr Smith of foreign affairs.

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry understands that the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) is planning protest action at the Australian High Commission in London against Australia’s live export trade.

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Question: PIAPH 06

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Animal Welfare

Hansard Page: 80 (26/05/08)

Senator Milne asked:

Mr Aldred—The minister's office and the department have certainly held a range of different meetings with representatives from groups. I would have to check whether we have met specifically with Dr Wirth, but certainly we have had quite a number of discussions with Heather Neil from the RSPCA, and also with Glenys Oogjes from Animals Australia and so on. I would not characterise it as a combative type of arrangement or relationship at all. There is quite a deal of constructive work that goes on.

Senator MILNE—Why are they saying that you have not responded to their videos et cetera?

Mr Aldred—I do not know about the specific wording of the quote and whether it refers to the fact that we have not done everything that we have been asked to do in terms of either closing down the trade or doing those sorts of things, as opposed to having not actually replied or spoken to the people concerned. I am just not quite sure of the context of it.

Senator MILNE—Could I, on notice, ask which animal welfare groups, the broadest category, the minister has met with since becoming minister?

Senator Sherry—We will take that on notice.

Answer:

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Tony Burke MP, has met with representatives of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) on several occasions and has been briefed on the 'Handle with Care' campaign. Representatives of the minister's office and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry have met with representatives of other animal welfare organisations such as Animals Australia, Voiceless and Compassion in World Farming.

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Question: PIAPH 07

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Sentinel Hive Program

Hansard Page: 85 (26/05/08)

Senator Scullion asked:

Senator SCULLION—Would you be making some sort of a comparison with, for example, the fruit fly trapping program or the screw-worm fly program? Are they programs that the industry has to have a more secure footing in?

Mr Aldred—There is quite a range of different types of programs. I would need to get some additional advice on the specific cost shares and so on.

Answer:

A range of programs for exotic insect pests operates at Australian ports including those for fruit fly and screw worm fly. Where these programs exist to support industry and market access, long term secure funding arrangements supported by the beneficiaries need to be examined. Each program needs to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether it is effective, how management and operational programs can be optimised, and how funding can be sourced to enable on-going operation of these programs.

A comparison with other programs will be undertaken as part of developing future arrangements for the National Sentinel Hive program.

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Question: PIAPH 08

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Ganglioneuritis

Hansard Page: 87-88 (26/05/08)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—Have you put to the Victorians that they should be quarantining areas known to have active virus from all human activity?

Senator MILNE—What advice have you provided to them about your views on what they should be doing?

Senator MILNE—I would specifically like to know whether you have asked them to quarantine areas with the active virus from all activity, whether you have asked them to stop dumping untreated effluent from licensed abalone processors into the marine environment, and whether there has been any discussion about having a Commonwealth review of the abalone aquaculture industry with a view to developing a management response that might be consistently applied regardless of where any disease might break out in the future. It seems to me that is what we need, a uniform set of responses that must be brought into play whichever jurisdiction it happens to be in.

Senator MILNE—As I have said, people are very unhappy that there seems to be more respect for jurisdictional responsibilities than there is for the fact that this disease is spreading and people seem to be wringing their hands.

Senator Sherry—I will take that on notice and I will see whether the minister has anything further to add given the situation.

Answer:

There is no constitutional authority for the Commonwealth to direct a state government on how to manage a disease that occurs solely within that state's borders. Australia has in place national arrangements for managing aquatic animal diseases under certain circumstances, and these were utilised in the response to abalone viral ganglioneuritis. These arrangements include consultation through the Aquatic Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Diseases (chaired by the Commonwealth) on the national technical response to the emergency, and through the Aquatic Animal Health Committee on ongoing management of the disease. The arrangements also include guidance through the Australia Aquatic Veterinary Emergency Plan (AQUAVETPLAN). The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has engaged in the deliberations of both of these committees and is funding the development of an AQUAVETPLAN disease strategy manual for abalone viral ganglioneuritis.

The department has not provided specific advice to the Victorian Government recommending the establishment of quarantine areas.

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We understand that Fisheries Victoria have established biosecurity protocols for abalone processors. No facilities pass abalone processing waste directly into the ocean; however, water from live holding tanks may be returned to the ocean untreated. We have been advised that the Victorian Government is conducting an audit of all processing facilities.

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Question: PIAPH 09

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Ganglioneuritis

Hansard Page: 89 (26/05/08)

Senator McGauran asked:

Senator McGAURAN—Yes. Just going back to the minister, could you find out, or let us know even now: there must be some legality with regard to national interest where you can intervene and take over as a matter of national interest.

Senator Sherry—You are seeking a legal basis for taking control of this situation?

Senator McGAURAN—Yes. In fact, I am certain there is.

Senator Sherry—We will take that on notice and see if we can find a legal basis on which the Commonwealth can take over control of the fishery.

Answer:

Under Australia's system of government, state and territory governments have responsibility for the management of animal diseases (including aquatic animal diseases) within their jurisdiction.

National coordination and management of emergency animal diseases is achieved through a cooperative approach by governments and industry. An Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement for aquatic industries would bind signatories to certain actions in the event of emergency disease response. These agreements exist for terrestrial disease emergencies but currently do not extend to aquatic animal disease emergencies. The department is driving an initiative to develop such arrangements between the abalone industry and the Australian and states / Northern Territory governments.

Regarding fisheries (rather than emergency animal disease control), the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) manages Australia's Commonwealth fisheries on behalf of the Australian community by applying the provisions of the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* and the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991*.

The offshore constitutional settlement (OCS) is the jurisdictional arrangement between the Commonwealth and states / Northern Territory which sets out responsibilities for offshore fisheries, mining, shipping and navigation and crimes at sea. The OCS provides for state / Northern Territory laws to apply inside three nautical miles (nm), and for Commonwealth laws to apply from three to 200nm. The *Fisheries Management Act* (sections 71 and 72) and reciprocal state / Northern Territory legislation provide the legal and administrative basis for the Australian Government and states / Northern Territory to make an arrangement for a fishery to override the existing jurisdictional lines set out by the OCS. The *Fisheries Management Act 1991* refers to these overriding agreements as 'arrangements with

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States'. However, they are known colloquially as OCS fisheries arrangements. Where an existing OCS arrangement is in place, such as for the Victorian abalone fishery, the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* does not apply.

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Question: PIAPH 10

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Citrus Canker

Hansard Page: 90 (26/05/08)

Senator Heffernan asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN—Inside the affected area where they bulldozed the trees, with all the rain et cetera has there been regrowth that had to be redone after the planting of the new lot of trees? Sometimes you will get a root system that will pop a sucker up.

Ms Ransom—I would have to check.

Answer:

There is an ongoing requirement on the landowner to destroy regrowth of all destroyed host plants whether on land that has been replanted or not. Surveys for regrowth are continuing every 90 days on each block where citrus was destroyed under the eradication program, until there have been three rounds of surveys with no regrowth detected. Survey staff are looking for symptoms of citrus canker on detected regrowth plants (prior to destruction) and on replanted commercial citrus.

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Question: PIAPH 11

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Exercise Feral Foot & Mouth Outbreak

Hansard Page: 91-92 (26/05/08)

Senator Heffernan asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN—Yes. It failed after a couple of days for a lack of resources, as I remember. And I do not know how you deal with the feral pigs out here, anyhow. What about an operation, just as an exercise, to understand the limitations in that country of a feral foot and mouth outbreak in Cape York Peninsula and see how you manage it?

Ms Gordon—I would have to defer to my colleague from Productivity—

Senator HEFFERNAN—I think in fairness to the department it has been more good luck than good management that nothing has gone wrong. And I am aware of the great conscientious effort of people in the service to do the monitoring that you are talking about, including some rather tragic incursions in some of that. But it would be an interesting exercise to run a brief where we did have an incursion from, inadvertently and all as it is, a feral pig or something up there. Because I really think that if we have got a million feral pigs and thousands of square kilometres with no-one in them—there are only 4,000 people, for God's sake, in the area—if you were a worrier you would go to bed every night worrying about them. If I had 25,000 cows and a supervised property and was doing well out of the live export trade et cetera, it would scare the living daylights out of me. I could not believe it, when I went to that property outside of Wadeye, that these blokes were bragging about the fact that they did not tag cattle because they had an abattoir there et cetera. Always kill a stranger; you never kill one of your own.

Mr Aldred—I will take your suggestion of an exercise on notice and—

Senator HEFFERNAN—I just think it would be a great thing to really get people focused on it.

Answer:

The question was answered in subsequent testimony during the hearings. Refer to Hansard pages 123 and 124 of 26 May 2008 **attached**.

[PIAPH 11 attachment]

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Question: PIAPH 12

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Red Fire Ants

Hansard Page: 104 (26/05/08)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—What are we down to in terms of a physical area?

Mr Aldred—I would have to take the area on notice.

Answer:

As of 3 June 2008, red imported fire ant infestations have been detected on 106 land parcels representing approximately 1 000 hectares in the greater Brisbane area.

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Question: PIAPH 13

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Red Fire Ant

Hansard Page: 105 (26/05/08)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—Given our experience and how much it has cost to actually manage this and try and eradicate it, what actions are we taking with our Pacific island neighbours and around the Pacific to raise awareness of the problems and so on to attempt to sort out these issues before we get them again?

Mr Aldred—I would have to take that on notice.

Senator MILNE—I am trying to get a handle on where I get a picture of the work Australia does on alien invasive species, both marine and terrestrial, in the region. Is it through AusAID? Is that mainly the delivery source?

Mr Aldred—I will take that on notice and provide you with a collation of information.

Answer:

The Pacific Regional Environment Program (www.sprep.org) is the lead international body addressing various issues impacting on the environment in Pacific island countries, including invasive species. The Australian Government, through AusAID, contributes general financial support to this body and towards specific activities it may conduct on a case by case basis. Specific activities are delivered through other agencies including the Australian Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. The main focus on invasive species through the Pacific Regional Environment Program has been the development of a regional invasive species strategy which may provide the foundation for future investments on invasive species in the Pacific region.

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Question: PIAPH 14

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Global Invasive Species Program

Hansard Page: 105 (26/05/08)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—Just before we go off the regional involvement, does the Australian government contribute to GISP, the Global Invasive Species Program?

Mr S Hunter—I do not know the answer to that. I think that is probably something that would occur through the environment department, if it did.

Mr Aldred—Again, I will take that on notice.

Answer:

The Australian Government does not make any direct financial support to the Global Invasive Species Program. However, Australian scientists are involved in contributing technical advice and input to various GISP activities on a case by case basis.

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Question: PIAPH 15

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Fruit Fly

Hansard Page: 111 (26/05/08)

Senator McGauran asked:

Senator McGAURAN—Can someone give me some background, particularly in regard to the Victorian situation, of the gravity of the matter?

Senator McGAURAN—Victoria has a fruit fly-free status and it trades off that. It is very proud of it. At what point will it lose that fruit fly-free status? How bad is this outbreak?

Answer:

Please see brief attached for PIAPH 16.

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Question: PIAPH 16

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Fruit Fly

Hansard Page: 113-114 (26/05/08)

Senators Nash and McGauran asked:

Senator NASH—I think that it is quite interesting that there is a very significant article about it, and I think the issue is whether or not it is an issue that is being reported on that the department was not aware of.

Mr Hunter—I am not sure that we can add much more to what we have said. We are happy to take the question on notice.

Senator NASH—But my question is: right now, sitting here, nobody had any knowledge that this was reported?

Mr Hunter—I am aware of reports but that is as much as my awareness goes to. Would you like us to take it on notice?

Senator McGAURAN—Is this your job or is it the state's job?

Ms van Meurs—If it is to do with a number of outbreaks in Victoria, from what I can gather from the little that you have told me, it is probably to do with interstate outbreaks, so it is an interstate issue. If it is to do with international outbreaks, as far as I am aware, Sunraysia is still free and able to export to a number of countries based on their area free status.

Senator McGAURAN—So, this is a matter for the states to handle, yet you are coordinating a national fruit fly strategy. If you ask me, I do not think you know what you are doing. What is the point of it?

Senator Sherry—I think that is a bit over the top. We will take it on notice. I will talk to the minister about it and at a convenient time to the committee we will get some more information for you. You well know that we do not always rely on reports in the media for accuracy in a whole manner of our activities. But we are happy to refer that to the department, get some detailed briefings and come back to the committee. In the absence of the officers knowing any more detail tonight, I think that is the most positive course I can suggest.

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Senator McGAURAN—Get back to me on the fruit fly. I would not like to see Victoria lose its fruit fly free status while you are still cobbling together your national strategy.

Senator Sherry—If we can cobble together a brief for you, will you be willing to accept it? I do not want to go to the minister if you are not interested and you think we are cobbling it together.

Senator McGAURAN—I am most interested.

Senator Sherry—Thank you. I will pass the request on.

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Answer:

The incidents referred to relate to detections of Queensland fruit fly in Victoria that are dealt with by the state government as part of routine response arrangements. For additional information please see **attached** brief.

[PIAPH 16 attachment]

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Question: PIAPH 17

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Fruit Fly

Hansard Page: 114 (26/05/08)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—On notice, when you come back on the national fruit fly strategy, I am interested to know whether the increased minimum temperatures in parts of Australia where fruit fly was never a risk before are now being identified—whether you are cross-checking with the climate data on changed minimum temperatures.

Answer:

Any information on fruit fly emerging in new areas is currently anecdotal as there is no consolidated data available. The National Fruit Fly Strategy through its recommendations on research and development and surveillance seeks to generate data that can be used as a basis for future work into the effects of climate change on fruit fly biology, ecology, distribution and abundance.

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Question: PIAPH 18

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Sentinel Hive/Varroa Mite

Hansard Page: 128 (26/05/08)

Senator Scullion asked:

Senator SCULLION—Do we have a response plan for the varroa mite?

Mr Cahill—That is a matter for Product Integrity, I think.

Senator SCULLION—I could perhaps put that on notice. Mr Aldred is always here; he lives here. Thank you very much, Mr Aldred. I am sorry that you are still here at this late hour.

Mr Aldred—That is fine, Senator. I will be back tomorrow night, I understand. I am advised that the answer is yes, and we can provide some details on that.

Answer:

There are forty-five ports that have international visitations that are not covered with a sentinel hive. The *Quarantine Act 1908* lists 65 Proclaimed first ports where international vessels are permitted to arrive into Australia. The original risk analysis conducted to identify ports that should be included in the sentinel hive program considered 50 ports. In 2007, hives were operational and inspected at least once at 20 of these ports. The risk assessment calculated that these ports presented a total of 89.3% of the assessed risk and that no port without a hive presented more than 2.1% of the assessed risk.

AusVetPlan includes a Disease Strategy Manual for 'Bee diseases and pests'. The specific pests and diseases addressed by the manual are Tropilaelaps mite, Varroa mite, Tracheal mite, Braula fly, Asian bees and Africanised bees. The manual includes the agreed response plan to incursions of these diseases.

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Question: PIAPH 19

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Varroa Mite

Hansard Page: 128 (26/05/08)

Senator Scullion asked:

Senator SCULLION—Are you dealing with cloudy wing virus, tracheal mite, a number of other associated foulbroods and that sort of stuff that would go along with that, or is this plan specifically to deal with the varroa mite?

Mr Aldred—I will need to take some advice.

Dr Garner—We have AUSVETPLAN for a number of bee diseases, including foulbrood, varroa and probably one or two others. Bee diseases are included under the AUSVETPLAN arrangement and are subject to our full emergency disease preparedness planning process. I can get you a list of all the diseases that are covered; I think we have about three or four diseases which have been identified for the bee industry.

Answer:

AusVetPlan includes a Disease Strategy Manual for ‘Bee diseases and pests’. The specific pests and diseases addressed by the manual are Tropilaelaps mite, Varroa mite, Tracheal mite, Braula fly, Asian bees and Africanised bees. The manual includes the agreed response plan to incursions of these diseases.

Cloudy wing virus, European foulbrood and American foulbrood are not included in the Disease Strategy Manual because they are endemic to Australia and control of endemic diseases is the responsibility of state/territory governments and industry. AusVetPlan is intended to cover arrangements for disease emergencies rather than diseases which are endemic.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2008

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: PIAPH 20

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Sentinel Hive

Hansard Page: 128 (26/05/08)

Senator Scullion asked:

Senator SCULLION—So the question would be: how many ports currently receive, I suppose, any international visitation and currently do not have a sentinel hive?

Dr Martin—Biosecurity Australia does not look after that program anymore. At the time when that review was done there were 27 ports, but I am sure we can get—

Senator SCULLION—I understand the number may be 35.

Dr Martin—We can get that information for you.

Senator SCULLION—Perhaps you could take this on notice. For clarity, Dr O'Connell, I will repeat the question: how many ports currently have international visitation and are not covered with a sentinel hive?

Answer:

Refer to PIAPH 18.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2008

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: PIAPH 21

Division/Agency: Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

Topic: Bee Producing Countries Free of Disease

Hansard Page: 128 (26/05/08)

Senator Scullion asked:

Senator SCULLION—In fact, I am more than happy to go to that website myself and look for it. You have been most useful. Dr Garner, there is something that may not be particularly in your area but is of interest. There are areas of the world that can now produce bees that are completely free of diseases—particularly in terms of production, because much of the world has obviously been impacted by varroa and other diseases, and it is very important. I understand that we have American and European foulbrood in a number of states of Australia. Is that correct?

Dr Garner—Yes, for American foulbrood. I am not sure about the situation with European foulbrood but I can check that for you. I am not a bee expert myself.

Answer:

European foulbrood occurs in all Australian states except Western Australia.
American foulbrood affects bees throughout Australia.