

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
 Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 246

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Policy Division

Topic: Myrtle Rust

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator SIEWART asked:

Has the Department funded any trials on Myrtle Rust? If yes, please outline the nature of the trial/s, location/s and funding.

Answer:

Myrtle rust - transition to management program

1. The Australian Government announced on 11 May 2011 funding of \$1.5 million to support a pilot of the national transitional containment principles developed by National Biosecurity Committee. The *Plan for the Transition to Management of Myrtle Rust* includes projects that are aimed at: improving knowledge of the disease; actions to manage and slow down spread; chemical control options and resistance breeding options.
2. Plant Health Australia is managing the pilot transition program that will operate from July 2011 to June 2013. The plan and implementation progress reports are available at <http://myrtlerust.net.au>.
3. A transition to management group chaired by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and comprising affected state and territory agencies, forest industry representatives and some technical specialists has been established to oversee the implementation of the program and monitor delivery of the program outcomes. Details for projects and funds committed to date¹ by the Australian Government are as follows:

Taxonomy and identity of the pathogen

Agency	Project	Funding
NSW Department of Primary Industries	3.1 Genome sequencing of Myrtle rust and guava rust.	\$175 000
CSIRO	3.2 Determining infectivity of Myrtle rust at specific developmental stages and investigating nuclear behavior using microscopy techniques.	\$23 549
NSW Department of Primary Industries	3.3 Collection of guava rust in South America for genome sequencing and classification projects - pending Brazilian export requirements.	\$60 000
University of Tasmania	3.4 Classification and diversity of the guava rust complex using molecular and morphological	\$60 000

¹Details of some projects differ from those presented in the plan due to revisions

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Agency	Project	Funding
	characters.	
Sydney Royal Botanical Gardens	3.5 Family placement of Myrtle rust and guava rust, by DNA extraction from both myrtle and guava rust families to determine exact species.	\$60 000

Potential impact and distribution

Agency	Project	Funding
The University of Sydney	Genetic basis of the virulence of Myrtle rust across its geographic range in Australia. Evaluating resistance of selected Myrtaceous species. Establishing a national myrtle rust resistance screening facility.	\$385 836

Chemical Control Options

Agency	Project	Funding
The University of Sydney and NSW Department of Primary Industry	Gathering efficacy data to identify the most effective chemicals for controlling myrtle rust.	\$223 859

Resistance Breeding Options

Agency	Project	Funding
Research School of Biology, Australian National University	6.1 Discovery of genetic markers for resistance to Myrtle rust infection in Myrtaceae (excluding members of tribe Eucalypteae).	\$121 460
CSIRO	6.2 Discovery of genetic markers for resistance to Myrtle rust infection in members of tribe Eucalypteae.	\$100 000

In addition, CSIRO has made the following contributions to Myrtle rust research:

CSIRO	Taxonomy and Identity of the Pathogen.	\$190 000 (\$25 000 from the Myrtle rust transition to management program)
CSIRO	Resistance Breeding Options.	\$178 000 (\$100 000 from the Myrtle rust transition to management program)
CSIRO	Strategic management of <i>Uredo rangelii</i> rust.	\$87 500 (\$69 000 from the eradication program)

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Question: 257

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Policy Division
Topic: Reform of Australia's biosecurity system
Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator EDWARDS asked:

With reference to Written Question on Notice 276, part 1, f, i (May Budget Estimates 2012) the Department was asked about the reforms that will increase the management of risks offshore and enhance co-regulatory arrangements. The Department stated that the costs of these arrangements will be met by the commercial entity.

1. What are the likely costs for the commercial entity under these arrangements (or if there are different costs incurred by different commercial entities depending on their activity, what is the range of costs likely to be borne by the commercial entity)?
2. How does this compare to the old system? Please provide examples of the rates under the new and old system for the same activity.

Answer:

1. Commercial entities incurred costs under the following examples listed in Written Question on Notice 276, part 1, f, i (May Budget Estimates 2012):
 - Audits of offshore activities that are conducted for the benefit of specific importers are cost recovered from the commercial entities. This includes, but is not limited to flights, transfers and accommodation. When the officer daily rate, incidentals and meals have been charged the basis for the charges currently aligns with the rates set out in the *Quarantine Service Fees Determination 2005*. Contracts with commercial entities are commercial-in-confidence.
 - The cost of developing improved offshore port and container hygiene systems was borne by the offshore entities. The department is not advised of these costs.
 - The training of Thai officials was jointly funded by the department and the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries.
2. The intention of the reforms is to manage biosecurity risk at the most efficient and effective point on the continuum of offshore, border and onshore environments. Identification of direct comparisons of costs pre and post reforms is not possible at this stage due to the new and varied nature of the systems.