

Broomrape - Est - 13 Oct 10

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.18, Sub-program 2.5: Rural Services, Performance Commentary, paragraph 1, line 2, which mentions branched broomrape control. What amount has been spent on the Branched Broomrape Program in 2009-10 and what amount is budgeted for 2010-11? In terms of achieving the goal of eradicating branched broomrape, where are we at with the program?

The Hon. M.F. O'BRIEN: I will refer that to Will, but I will just make a passing comment. It is a national program that is funded by all of the states as part of this national arrangement that I alluded to with Biosecurity Australia. Effectively, it is a form of insurance. We will go to the assistance of other states to assist them in dealing with a particular issue so that it does not get beyond their border and, with branched broomrape, other states are assisting us.

We have received national funding through the Primary Industries Ministerial Council to June 2012 and there is a national commitment beyond 2012, but it is subject to obtaining a satisfactory level of industry funding up to 20 per cent of the national commitment. To me, that would indicate that this program will continue to run on. I think it would be an act of collective folly if it did not. Some paddocks will be released from quarantine in 2012 and this will further demonstrate the success of the national eradication program. So, funding is assured and progress is occurring on the ground. I will be meeting with the community consultative committee, I think, later this month.

Mr PEDERICK: Next week, I think.

The Hon. M.F. O'BRIEN: Next week, is it? I have a full diary. In essence, member for Hammond—because I know this is of some concern to yourself—the funding is there and we have a commitment through the national structure to continue the funding, dependant on industry picking up 20 per cent (I do not think that is a big ask), and we are seeing some paddocks returned to production.

Mr PEDERICK: On the same budget line, have there been any new discoveries in new areas in this survey period? Obviously, the survey teams have been out recently. So, are there any new discoveries that will take, I believe, up to 12 years of management?

The Hon. M.F. O'BRIEN: I will pass that over to Will Zacharin.

Mr ZACHARIN: No, the recent surveys have indicated some excellent results. We have only had a 5 per cent return from current infected paddocks this year. There has been no expansion of the current quarantine zone and, as the minister has said, we are coming up to the 12-year period where a significant number of those paddocks will come out of quarantine in 2012.

However, we are still waiting for emergence. Because of the cooler weather, the broomrape that has emerged at the moment is fairly small, so we need to go back over some of those paddocks to make sure that they are clear or whether there is a return. However, at the moment I understand the return is running at about 5 per cent, which is within the performance measures for the program.