

FLY CONTROL

**96. Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

I refer to the fly problem in the south west.

- (1) How are fly populations measured and what is the current fly number per hectare?
- (2) What fly control measures are currently in place?
- (3) What consideration has been given to re-establish a fly control by dung beetle program?
- (4) What professional advice has the minister received on this matter?

**Hon KIM CHANCE replied:**

I thank Hon Nigel Hallett for some notice of this question. I am aware that the member's question relates specifically to bush flies as a result of an earlier conversation.

- (1) Bush fly populations can be monitored with bait traps developed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. Fly populations have not been monitored since the successful establishment of exotic dung beetles.
- (2) Control afforded by the established dung beetle species continues; however, its effectiveness fluctuates with climatic conditions.
- (3) The national dung beetle program was reviewed and a report published in 2007, "Introduced Dung Beetles in Australia 1967-2007" by Dr Penny Edwards which concluded that there would be difficulties in meeting all the requirements of filling the gap in early spring dung beetle activity. The issues associated with the reported build-up in fly numbers over the 2007-08 summer season are still being evaluated.
- (4) Not all experts in the area agree with the advice of former CSIRO entomologist John Feehan. I continue to receive advice from the former leader of the CSIRO dung beetle project in WA, Dr James Ridsdill-Smith and senior entomologists from the Department of Agriculture and Food. I would be very happy to organise for Hon Nigel Hallett, and any other member who is interested, a briefing from the department's entomologists on this quite complicated issue.