

SMALL HIVE BEETLE INFESTATION — EAST KIMBERLEY

381. Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm to the Minister for Child Protection representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food
- (1) Is the Minister aware of a report by the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) entitled ‘Small Hive Beetle Surveillance Report Kununurra - October 2008’ (‘The Report’)?
 - (2) If yes to (1), is the Minister aware that on the sixth page of the report the author has stated that the source of the infestation of Small Hive Beetle (SHB) is ‘highly likely’ to have been the former premises of a particular beekeeper (Named in the report but referred to in this question as ‘BK3’)?
 - (3) Is it correct that BK3 had brought back beekeeping equipment from Queensland where SHB is endemic?
 - (4) If yes to (3), was that an action approved by DAFWA?
 - (5) If it was not approved by DAFWA, what action has been taken by DAFWA in relation to what appears to be an illegal movement of infested material?
 - (6) What action has DAFWA taken to eradicate the SHB infestation in the area identified in the report as the ‘epi-centre’ since it was identified on those premises in October 2008?
 - (7) Was SHB also found to be present in hives that are some distance from the ‘epi-centre’ premises?
 - (8) If yes to (7), was SHB infestation identified at sites shown on a DAFWA map as BK3 Carlton Springs, BK3 Frank Wise Institute, BK3 Woolerreegerleng, BK3 Cockatoo Springs, BK3 Packsaddle, and BK3 Valentine Springs?
 - (9) Is it the case that all of these hives came from the site that has been identified in the report as the ‘epi-centre’ of SHB activity?
 - (10) Was BK3 entitled to have hives in all of those locations that were enumerated in (8) of this question?
 - (11) If no to (10), what action has been taken by DAFWA in relation to BK3’s activities that may have led to the spread of SHB in the East Kimberley?
 - (12) Have DAFWA quarantined the beekeeping equipment that was used by BK3?
 - (13) Has the infestation been destroyed?
 - (14) Has SHB infestation from the identified epi-centre caused infestation of the hives of beekeepers other than BK3?
 - (15) If yes to (14), what has DAFWA and BK3 done to assist other beekeepers who were infested through no fault of their own?
 - (16) Have other beekeepers suffered economic loss as a result of the actions which led to the importation of SHB?
 - (17) If yes to (16), what is the extent of that loss?
 - (18) Can beekeepers who were innocent victims of the illegal importation of SHB be fully compensated for their losses?
 - (19) Does DAFWA admit liability for failing to prevent the interstate transportation of infested material from Queensland?

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY replied:

(1)-(3) Yes

4 No

- (5) The undocumented importation, apparently in breach of the Beekeepers Act 1963, had taken place 12 months or more prior to the Department of Agriculture and Food (the Department) becoming aware of it and therefore prosecution for an offence was not available.
- (6) In consultation with the Bee Industry Consultative Committee, it was decided in January 2008 that the eradication of SHB at Kununurra was not feasible. Efforts are focused on containing the infestation in Kununurra and preventing spread to the Southwest area of the State.

(7)-(8) Yes

- (9) This can not be positively confirmed.
- (10) The location of some beehives is not addressed by the Department administered legislation and so I am not in a position to answer this.
- (11) Not applicable.
- (12) The beehives are not quarantined from being moved within the Kimberley area but they may not be moved outside this area.
- (13) No.
- (14) This cannot be positively confirmed.
- (15) It is the responsibility of the beekeeper to maintain apiary hygiene. The Department is assisting beekeepers by:
- undertaking surveillance to identify the distribution or absence of SHB with a view to minimizing the impact on beekeepers;
 - encouraging beekeepers to share information to enable the Department to assist in SHB management;
 - funding the operations of the SHB control program;
 - making use of national expertise to assist in the SHB control program; and
 - introducing new regulations to enable enforcement, where necessary, of appropriate management.
- (16) Not known.
- (17) Not applicable.
- (18) The Beekeepers Producers' Committee under the Agricultural Produce Commission Act has made some funds available to affected producers.
- (19) No.