

EUROPEAN WASPS — BIOSECURITY CONTROL MEASURES

6492. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Agriculture and Food

In relation to the establishment of a group to coordinate biosecurity measures against European wasps made at a recent forum organised by the Department of Agriculture and Food, I ask

- (a) who are the participants in the group representing the:
  - (i) Federal government;
  - (ii) Western Australian government;
  - (iii) local government;
  - (iv) industry; and
  - (v) Community;
- (b) who will be the person responsible for directing the group;
- (c) why did the Department of Agriculture and Food abandon their proposal to pass responsibility of Wasp surveillance and nest destruction onto local government councils;
- (d) what will be the cost of the new 'group' biosecurity program to control the European wasp from establishment in Western Australia;
- (e) what has been the yearly expenditure on the European wasp program for the past four years;
- (f) how will the participants' roles be defined in undertaking the program;
- (g) what strategies are in place for surveillance and who in the group will undertake this role; and
- (h) what strategy will be used to measure the new group's success in keeping the European wasp out of Western Australia?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (a) The establishment of working group is currently in progress. As nominations from different groups are still being received, information on participants representing different groups cannot be provided at this stage.
- (b) Officers of the Department of Agriculture and Food will coordinate the working group activities under the overall direction of Director Plant Biosecurity, Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia.
- (c) The Department of Agriculture and Food did not propose to pass nest destruction and surveillance activities onto local government.
- (d) The Department of Agriculture and Food has allocated \$130 000 for the European wasp program for the 2011–2012 season. The working group is expected to develop better options for the ongoing management of the European wasp risk.
- (e) The average yearly expenditure for the European wasp program has been around \$75 000 for the last four years.
- (f) Roles will be defined by the "Terms of Reference" which will be finalised at the first working group meeting in December 2011.
- (g) European wasp surveillance traps are currently being installed by the Department of Agriculture and Food in the Perth metropolitan area for the coming season. At least 200 European wasp surveillance traps will be established in metropolitan Perth this year and more in risk country areas. The working group will further determine surveillance strategy.
- (h) The standard indicator of eradication success is the continued absence of the pest. This will be verified by the trapping and surveillance program as in previous years.