

Fire ant industry update – 17 January 2014

Current situation - Fire ants detected in Yarwun

Biosecurity Queensland has made significant progress in responding to the fire ant detection in Yarwun, Gladstone.

To date, there are five infested properties on and around the Fisherman's Landing site with very low levels of infestation. The distribution of fire ant nests indicates that Fisherman's Landing is the likely centre of the infestation.

Based on when the site was developed, it is likely that fire ants have been here for 2-3 years.

All known nests have been destroyed and surveillance has been completed 1.5km around the initial detection. The surveillance program has now been extended to six kilometres out from known infestation. Targeted surveillance is also underway based on current tracing efforts.

There are currently nine Biosecurity Queensland officers on the ground and around 30 trained WorkPac field staff assisting with the fire ant response.

Genetic testing is still underway however results show that these fire ants are a new incursion in Australia. It is likely that the fire ant population originated from southern United States.

Our goal over the coming weeks is to continue with on-ground surveillance and to increase community involvement by engaging the public to check their yards for fire ants and report their findings.

It is important to reiterate that the Queensland Government does not name any businesses or identify sites associated with

fire ant detections to third parties including media outlets.

Aerial treatment

Biosecurity Queensland will be aurally treating the Fisherman's Landing site to further reduce the chance of fire ant spread. The site will be treated with a chemical called Methoprene that is commonly used in flea treatments for dogs and cats and mosquito control products. This chemical is not harmful to humans or animals.

Training

More than 300 people have received training on fire ant identification, impacts and movement controls. More sessions have been planned in the coming weeks.

If you have staff that require training, contact kimmy.wolfenden@daff.qld.gov.au to arrange a session.

Further information

Thank you for working with us to ensure that the risk of fire ant spread is minimised.

For more information, contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit the website, www.daff.qld.gov.au/fireants.