



INDUSTRY CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT

22 January – 22 February 2021

CSIRO RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RIFA MOVEMENT CONTROLS

Background

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) carried out a review of the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program's fire ant movement controls and the scientific principles that underpin them. These are the rules for how industries, businesses and the general public should store, move and treat materials that are at risk of spreading fire ants within and outside the fire ant biosecurity zones. These carriers include soil, potted plants, turf, hay and baled materials, mulch, manure and other fire ant carriers such as quarry products.

This review was part of a business improvement process where the Program is looking to streamline and improve movement controls over time, with the ultimate aim of preventing the spread of fire ants. CSIRO initiated consultation with peak industry bodies as part of their review process in July 2020 and since the completion of the review, engaged stakeholders have been highly anticipating the release of the report. In order to bring this initial consultation process to a close, the Program released the report on the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries engagement hub (eHub). The eHub provided a summary of the findings, access to the full report and the original terms of reference, as well as a survey to obtain information specifically on the industry and carrier materials stakeholders dealt with, their thoughts on the existing movement controls and how they believe CSIRO's recommendations could potentially impact business in the future if implemented.

This document summarises the findings of the consultation that took place with industry in relation to the CSIRO review. The recommendations made by CSIRO have not been adopted but will be considered along with this feedback when the Program reviews its fire ant risk mitigation measures.

Engagement process

Following the release of the review on the eHub on 22 January 2021, the original stakeholders contacted by CSIRO were informed of its release directly by email. An article about the review and the request for feedback was provided in the January 2021 fire ant newsletter. The consultation period remained open until 22 February 2021, where reminder emails and follow up calls were conducted by the Program. A detailed breakdown of this process can be seen in [Table 1](#) in the statistical summary section.

Summary

Overall, a total of 39 submissions were received by the Program via the survey and the feedback portal. Both generalised and detailed feedback was provided, covering a range of industries that deal with fire ant carriers including nurseries, hay, landscapers and other government bodies such as councils and individuals from the Department of Transport and Main Roads. A detailed breakdown of the feedback can be seen in [Table 2](#).



The general consensus is that most industry practises were not well represented by the review, and therefore some of the recommendations would not be feasible for industry to adopt, particularly for the fodder production industry (hay). This included the chaffing of hay before it is moved, and the compulsory chemical treatment (particularly dripping and drenching) of all nursery stock. As a result, the request for further consultation was clearly communicated across the array of industries that provided feedback. Generally, the existing risk mitigation measures were seen as effective despite already being described as onerous for particular industries. This included the impracticality of applying some existing measures to large civil construction projects, particularly when dealing with large volumes of soil, as well as the existing regulations for nurseries. Various stakeholders also indicated that they were uncertain on what the CSIRO recommendations actually meant for their industry.

A few survey participants suggested there was insufficient time available to provide feedback considering the detail and length of the report. It should be noted that despite the survey deadline, the feedback portal remains available on the eHub. Nearly all respondents stated that further consideration should be taken into addressing some of the data gaps highlighted by the review, along with the practicality of the recommendations before any further decisions are made on the movement controls and how these might impact businesses.

Overall, the eHub received a total of 1935 visitors and had a number of available documents downloaded. Despite the number of visitors, only 39 submissions were made. This is likely due to the broad scope of the feedback requested and the non-specific nature of the recommendations made.

Overview of sentiment

- Most of the people in favour of the changes commented on the need to fill the gaps in information in order to have a strong evidence approach for fire ant regulation.
- Most of the people against the changes believe that the changes are too onerous for industry and the Program will be overregulating without much basis for doing so.
- Most of the stakeholders who are unsure of the changes are part of the building and development industry (3) or local government (4).
- Lack of enforcement was a reoccurring topic across several industries.
- Nursery representatives had a high response rate compared with other industries. They had four survey submissions and six others added additional information, including detailed assessments of the impacts.

Statistical summary

Table 1: Engagement process and click rates

ENGAGEMENT TYPE	DATE	DATABASES/STAKEHOLDER LIST	TOTAL REACH	OPENED	CLICK THROUGH TO EHUB
THANK YOU EMAIL	22 January	Original CSIRO participants	82	51.22%	38.10%
NEWSLETTER	25 January	All program databases including clients, peak bodies and	10,354	36.50%	11.41%



		associations, SAG, Steering Committee and more.			
REMINDER	8 February	FAMS, Industry contacts in CaSES, Peak bodies and Associations, CSIRO participants	4475	35.58%	14.26%
FOLLOW-UP CALLS	First week of February	Peak bodies and key organisations	12 calls	N/A	
REMINDER	17 February	FAMS, Industry contacts in CaSES, Peak bodies and Associations, CSIRO participants	4475	33.32%	8.28%
FOLLOW-UP CALLS	Second week of February	Councils, peak bodies and key organisations	15 calls	N/A	

Table 2: Feedback response breakdown

Industries* (note the industry categories here may not align with the survey categories because they were not unique).	Total respondents per industry	No. who agree with CSIRO recommendations	No. who disagree with CSIRO recommendations	Unsure	No change
Quarries	1		1		
Hay	3		3		
Nursery	10	1	6	2	1
Civil	2	1		1	
Building/construction	6			3	3
Council	4			4	
Utilities	2		1	1	
Landscaping	1			1	
Resident	1				1
Environment	1	1			
Other States	2	2			
Other government bodies	6	1	3	1	1
Total	39	6	14	13	6

Table 3: eHub key figures

Number of visitors	Interactive users	Survey responses	Additional feedback	Total feedback submissions	Downloaded documents
1935	31	28	14	39	376

*Note: additional feedback may also include survey participants.

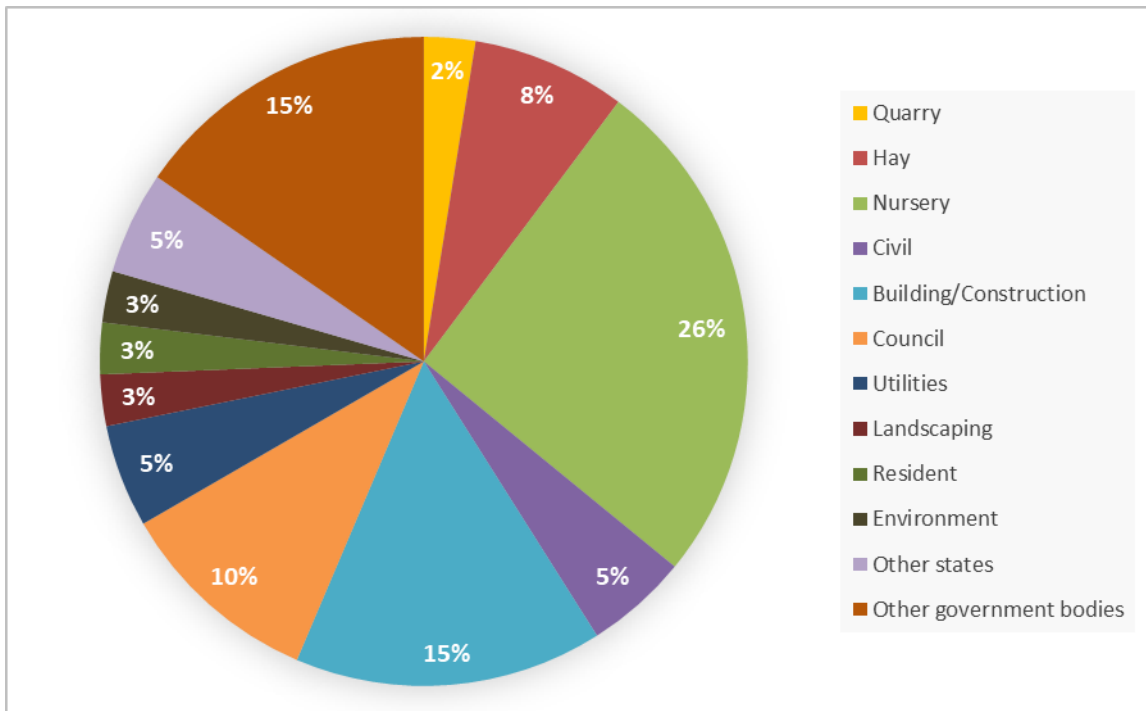


Figure 1: Visual representation of total respondents per industry