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Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation Review: Red Imported Fire Ant Scientific Principles and Controls

Summary of recommendations for consideration

Materials that may carry fire ants	Current fire ant movement controls (state and interstate requirements)	CSIRO recommendations
<p>Other fire ant carriers Including: product or by-product of mining or quarrying such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gravel • sand • chitters • coal fines • coal stone • decomposed granite • overburden. 	<p>Regulations: Correct storage is needed if the product is being stored for more than 24 hours.</p> <p>It can be stored off the ground and covered; for example, in a truck or bin that has a tarp or is parked in a shed.</p> <p>If stored on the ground, it must be covered and on a barrier that cannot be penetrated by fire ants, such as a 200 micron plastic sheet or concrete or bitumen with no cracks. It could be stored on compacted ground (not sand) but the whole area needs to be treated with chemical.</p> <p>On-ground materials also need a chemical treatment to be applied in a 30 cm wide strip around the perimeter of the storage area.</p> <p>Stored product should be disturbed Disturbance (e.g. turning, screening, crushing, shredding) needs to take place at least every 21 days and 24 hours before being moved to another location.</p>	<p>Movement of other carriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regulation permits the movement of gravels, sand and non-soil aggregates outside of the biosecurity zones if the regulated conditions have been met. Given the likely attraction of these stockpiles to fire ants this results in the highest residual risk in the review. • Moving the material to a secure waste facility within the same zones reduces pest establishment and spread (this is only achieved if the waste facility is secure). • Moving the material away from the site within 24 hours is reasonable from a practical standpoint, but there is no study to support it. <p>Storage for other carriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These products are not generally bagged and often used on major public works and development projects where the large quantities involved are likely to impact the feasibility of covering stockpiles or disturbing adequately. <p>Disturbance of other carriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance using a “turning” method must be done vigorously to ensure a queen is separated from her workers, or, to reduce the possibility of ‘queenless’ workers adopting a new queen and creating a new colony. This would be difficult for operators and inspectors to assess.



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These materials can move within, across and outside of biosecurity zones if you have followed the storage and treatment procedures or are moving the material within 24 hours of receiving it. There are different restrictions to follow if you are moving the plants to a waste facility.

- Rigorous disturbance is less feasible for large stockpiles which poses significant risk of spreading fire ants, including outside the zones. However, it is noted these products are likely to move shorter distances in comparison to other carriers such as potted plants.
- Methods of crushing, screening and washing are more feasible mitigation measures.

Other

- Property freedom/inspection by a trained/qualified person will have 80 per cent detection confidence for established nests. However, inspections will not detect new, underground nests and, therefore, are not reliable as a stand-alone strategy.
- Property inspection and routine fire ant baiting may be used to reduce the risk associated from ground ants, but not those flying in.