

Situation Update

North East Australian Plague Locusts

The information contained in this update was correct when it was prepared
at 12 pm 22 November 2008

Situation as at 12 pm Saturday 22nd November 2008

A total of 518 sightings have been confirmed as having Australian Plague Locusts.

Recent rainfalls may lead to an increase in grass and weed growth. This may provide an additional food source, allowing locusts to increase their body fat, resulting in increased potential for egg laying.

Locusts are starting to fly and may begin laying another generation of eggs that could begin hatching in mid-December. This is a very visible phase of their lifecycle and may be the first time many northern Victorians will have seen locusts this spring.

APL are a natural phenomenon and cannot ever be completely eradicated - despite the best combined efforts of DPI, landholders and the community to control the outbreak.

DPI encourages vigilance to look out for egg laying locusts to determine where any new infestations may start and report to the Locust Hotline on 1300 13 5559.

Landholders from all areas of Victoria are encouraged to take suspected locust samples to their local DPI centre. Staff there will arrange forwarding of the sample to the Locust ICC for identification by an entomologist.

Last 24 hours

Field Teams are inspecting sites around previous egg bed locations and sites forecast to contain maturing adults in areas that have had sufficient recent rain to promote green growth. These inspections will allow identification of possible 'hot spot' activity.

Six new (unconfirmed APL) sightings were reported in Campaspe, Moira, Strathbogie, Towong and Mitchell.

Strategic surveillance activities have taken place in all parts of the primary zone and in some areas outside of the primary zone.

The Incident Management Team provides weekly maps to local governments with confirmed roadside sightings. The Campaspe, Shepparton, Benalla, Wangaratta, Strathbogie and Moira Shires have all responded positively to undertaking control operations.

Safety Messages

Motorists, please note that field teams will be working on roadsides in Northern Victoria.

Flying locusts may constitute a driving hazard for motorists.

A motor safety fact sheet is available on the DPI website at www.dpi.vic.gov.au.

To report sightings of Locusts, contact the Locust Hotline on **1300 13 5559**.

More information is available on the DPI website: www.dpi.vic.gov.au.

Media Enquiries: 5824 5563.

This information is provided by the Department of Primary Industries. Controlling Australian Plague Locusts is a partnership between the Australian Plague Locust Commission (with all State and Commonwealth representatives), the Victorian Government, public and private landholders and the Victorian community.