



# Fire ant program embraces review as eradication efforts show promise

The National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication program is seeing positive results both inside and out, with improvements to the program itself underway, and eradication efforts showing promise in the west.

Steering Committee Chair, Dr Wendy Craik said the Steering Committee and program management have welcomed the recommendations of the recent independent Efficiency and Effectiveness Review commissioned by the National Steering Committee.

“We have accepted the vast majority of the recommendations and the program has already started to implement many of them,” said Dr Craik.

“The program has shown a sustained commitment to eradicating fire ants and implementing these recommendations will further improve efficiency and effectiveness.

“After three years of intensive eradication treatment nearing completion in the Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim and parts of the Ipswich local government area (Eradication Area 1), all of our monitoring sites are showing no sign of fire ants.

“However, results from our winter surveillance commencing in July will be critical to informing whether we can move to clearance in this area.

“That means replacing the total coverage treatment by air and ground used in the first three years, with more targeted surveillance and spot treatment of any residual ants found,” she said.

Clearing the area of fire ants completely will still take several years of ‘mopping up’ the highly aggressive and invasive pest, until no more are found. Once fire ants are cleared, freedom from fire ants can be declared in that area.

“Recent changes to the fire ant biosecurity zones at the end of May will further protect Eradication Area 1 from re-infestation,” said Dr Craik.

We’re planning to move east with our eradication treatment next year into Eradication Area 2 from mid-August, consistent with our west-to-east strategy in the Ten Year Plan.

“Like any environmental challenge that is unpredictable and constantly changing, the program needs to review the science and constantly adapt practices to defeat this pest,” she said.

Efficiency and effectiveness reviews of the program are scheduled every two years to keep these improvements coming.



The National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program is a national program funded by all state, territory and the federal governments in a cost-shared partnership. The Queensland-based program is overseen by a nine-member Steering Committee made up of national and international scientific eradication experts.

For more information about the program, the review, or the Steering Committee, please visit [daf.qld.gov.au/fireants](http://daf.qld.gov.au/fireants).

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