



MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES
MINISTER FOR ENERGY
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES
MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

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First reports of locust hatchings

Farmers are being urged to report any locust activity to authorities, following the first reports of locust hatchings in parts of the Central West and Riverina, Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald said today.

Minister Macdonald said reports had been received from properties in the Forbes and Condobolin Rural Lands Protection Boards, as well as Narrandera, Wagga Wagga and Murray RLPBs in the south.

“We were expecting warmer spring conditions to trigger locust hatchings and now that we have started getting reports it is vital all farmers report any activity so that appropriate control measures can be taken,” he said.

“Farmers who sight hatchings on their properties should contact their local RLPB, while we also ask people generally to keep an eye out for locusts, especially in those areas where major damage was experienced in 2004.”

Minister Macdonald said action plans are in place with a range of agencies prepared to provide a coordinated response, including the RLPBs, NSW Farmers’ Association and the Australian Plague Locust Commission (APLC).

“While this has been very much a team effort so far, we now rely heavily on the cooperation of farmers to report hatchings, so we know exactly where chemical and other control measures are needed,” he said.

“In recent weeks we have provided training to more than 145 staff from the Department of Primary Industries, RLPBs and the APLC.

“This training will help ensure we have a well prepared team of staff ready to help control locusts and work with farmers to minimise damage caused to crops and pasture.”

Minister Macdonald said authorities are expecting more reports to come in from other parts of the Central West and southern NSW in the coming week.

“Thanks to the reports earlier in the year of egg laying, and our information from past outbreaks, we are able to predict activity which also helps our preparedness,” he said.

Optimal time for spraying locusts is three weeks after hatching, when they have banded together. Locusts usually take to the wing about five weeks after hatching.

If landholders see any locust activity, they should report it to their local RLPB.

Media contacts: Lyndall Derrig 0400 462 447 or Trudy Glasgow 0427 217 354