



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

MEDIA RELEASE

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RED FIRE ANT CONTROL AREA EXTENDED

Surveillance and eradication efforts are being stepped up in the war against the highly invasive red imported fire ants detected at a Port Botany facility.

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, said the control area has been extended across a two kilometre radius to assist with surveillance and eradication efforts.

“While no additional sites have been found, authorities are taking all possible steps to prevent any potential spread of the pest,” Minister Hodgkinson said.

“The control area gives greater powers to trained inspectors to undertake a targeted surveillance program, including search and entry powers to ensure all potential habitats for fire ants are checked.

“A control order has also been activated, to limit the movement of high-risk materials out of the two kilometre control area that could contain the imported red fire ant, such as soil, mulch, pot plants, manure, bark, hay, turf, poultry litter, logs and gravels.

“These measures are consistent with controls used in Queensland and are in line with the National Fire Ant Eradication Program.”

“The control area takes in over 2,000 residential homes and other port facilities, playgrounds and golf courses. All known nests on the original site have now been baited twice and the early results are promising.”

Minister Hodgkinson said surveillance, trapping and elite odour detection dogs have now covered 366 hectares across the two kilometre zone.

“Five high priority plant nurseries have been inspected with no evidence of ant activity,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“I would like to acknowledge the support being offered by a number of Commonwealth, Queensland and NSW government agencies through the Emergency Operations Centre.

“The NSW Government has over 400 biosecurity staff who work hard to protect our \$12 billion primary industries sector. These frontline staff are working around the clock to respond to this serious detection and every effort will be taken to stop the spread of this pest.”

Important information:

- Eradication efforts are being informed by protocols adopted under the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program.
- Red imported fire ants can inflict painful stings on people, pets and livestock and pose a significant social, economic and environmental threat through attacking animals and invading food and water sources.
- The fire ants are reddish-brown in colour from 2 to 6 mm in length and may be confused with the common coastal brown ant but can be distinguished by its aggressive behaviour.
- Any suspected sighting of the ants are to be reported to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.
- People can send photos of suspected ants to biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au