

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

“Please note, when implementing this procedure you must consider whether any human rights are engaged under the *Human Rights Act 2019* and whether any limitations on human rights are reasonable and justifiable. If you engage a human right you should conduct a proportionality assessment under the Act. Additionally, this procedure has been reviewed on 21/12/21 to ensure actions and decisions under this procedure can be made in a way that is compatible with human rights.”

1 Purpose

This document has been developed to provide guidance on the responsibilities and governance arrangements for the surveillance and control of locusts in Queensland. The SOP details a scalable standardised process for a locust response within Queensland and summarises the following locust management documents prepared by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF):

- a. DAF Locust surveillance and control in Queensland Version 2 (the Policy)
- b. DAF Locust Management SOP
- c. DAF Oversight Group roles and responsibilities
- d. Locust Oversight Group (LOG) terms of reference
- e. LOG roles and responsibilities
- f. SOP Coordination Centre Management during a locust response
- g. Flowchart for defining appropriate DAF response to locusts.

2 Abbreviations, acronyms and definitions

Term/acronym	Definition
APLC	Australian Plague Locust Commission
BAU	Business as usual
BO	Biosecurity Officer
BORIS	Biosecurity Online Resources and Information Systems
BQ	Biosecurity Queensland
CBO	Chief Biosecurity Officer, member of DOG
DAF	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
DOG	DAF Oversight Group
GBO	General biosecurity obligation
IP&A	Invasive Plants and Animals Program (BQ)
LG	Local Government
LOG	Locust Oversight Group
PMO	Pest Management Officer (LG)
Policy	Locust Surveillance and Control in Queensland - Policy
PPCF	Plague Pest Contingency Fund
SDCG	State Disaster Coordination Group

3 Introduction

Locusts are native to Queensland and are constantly present within the environment. Serious economic impact to agricultural areas (principally cropping and grazing industries) can occur when a series of favourable seasons lead to generational population increases. The three most economically important species are the Australian plague locust (*Chortoicetes terminifera*), the migratory locust (*Locusta migratoria*), and the spur-throated locust (*Austracris guttulosa*). Adult locusts are capable of flying hundreds of kilometres to attack crops far from their hatching grounds.

In Queensland, significant locust plagues have occurred since the 1930s covering millions of hectares. Favourable environmental conditions that can potentially lead to significant population increases are generally related to the timing, geographic extent and duration of rainfall and subsequent vegetation growth – conditions that are ideal for egg and nymph development and survival, and adult migration.

Locusts are not a prohibited or restricted invasive animal under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (the Act), however the owner or occupier of land, industry and all levels of government are responsible for mitigating the biosecurity risks of locusts as defined by the key principle of shared responsibility in the Act.

Preventative control is long recognised as being the most effective method of managing locust outbreaks. This requires routine monitoring for locust nymphs and adults, and early control by an owner or occupier of land as part of their general biosecurity obligation (GBO) under the Act to manage the biosecurity risks posed by locusts. The most effective method of control is breaking the locust lifecycle by controlling nymphs while on the ground and unable to fly, and controlling adults before they can lay eggs. On-ground treatment of nymphs is generally within the capacity of individual owners or occupiers of land to control using agricultural spraying equipment, especially when they form bands.

Once adult locusts reach swarm levels they may be beyond the effective control capacity of individual owners or occupiers of land to control. If migration poses a credible threat to agricultural production, a coordinated response from multiple stakeholders using both ground and aerial surveillance and control measures may be required. Local governments within areas susceptible to locust damage have made payments into the Plague Pest Contingency Fund (PPCF) administered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to fund these control measures.

In-crop control remains the responsibility of the landholder.

The aim of Queensland’s locust management framework is to reduce the risks of locusts having a significant impact on agricultural production by encouraging early detection and preventative control to disrupt the locust’s lifecycle and minimise the risks of populations forming bands, swarms and eventually plagues.

4 Responsibilities

Locust management in Queensland is a shared responsibility, which is a key principle and a legal requirement of the GBO under the Act. The owner or occupier of land, industry and all levels of government are responsible for mitigating the biosecurity risks of locusts.

4.1 Owner or Occupier of Land (including local and state government)

The management of locusts is primarily the responsibility of the person who deals with locusts that are:

- on land under their control, and
- that they know about, or should reasonably be expected to know about.

Locusts are considered to be biosecurity matter under the Act, which places a GBO on everyone dealing with locusts to:

- monitor for the presence of locusts on land under their control
- report significant locust activity to DAF, and
- undertake control of locusts on land under their control to prevent the formation swarms.

4.2 Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF and BQ)

Locust management by DAF is carried out as a scalable, standardised three-stage process to prevent plague development and migration to (or within) the strategic cropping regions of Queensland:

- Stage 1 – preliminary assessment – species, abundance and distribution
- Stage 2 – response activation and evaluation of responsibility of control
- Stage 3 – incident management and locust response

Escalation to a PPCF-funded Stage 3 locust response is approved by the Locust Oversight Group (LOG) based on an assessment of the threat, strategic benefit, feasibility of control, potential effectiveness, likely costs and resources required.

BQ has developed capacity building training packages for stakeholders on locust ecology, identification, surveillance, data collection, insecticide use and control options. Training has been provided to local government officers in high-risk areas to improve skills and capabilities and increase their ability to undertake locust surveillance and proactive control measures. Training sessions (in conjunction with local governments) will also be conducted for landholders, and the training materials are available for local government officers to assist with promoting to landholders the message of early intervention control.

Biosecurity officers also undertake routine community engagement as part of business as usual (BAU) by providing local governments, agricultural producers and other owners or occupiers of land with technical advice and information on locust identification, the general biosecurity obligation (GBO) and treatment options. Information on locust identification, species, distribution, densities, life cycles, habitats, impacts, damage to crops, monitoring, responsibility for control and potential control options are provided on the Biosecurity Queensland website (www.daf.qld.gov.au).

4.3 Local Government

As an owner or occupier of land, local governments have a GBO to deal with locusts as detailed in section 4.1.

Local governments are also in a position to assist with stages 1 and 2 (outlined in section 5.1 and 5.2) by providing a crucial coordination role to assist landholders to meet their obligations under the Act to control locusts.

Aspects of this coordination could include:

- Provide advice, relevant extension materials and links to BQ online resources to promote and facilitate early intervention control
- Coordinate groups of landholders to undertake control over property boundaries
- Property site visits to identify locusts, assess densities and recommend treatment options
- Alert local rural merchants of escalating population numbers to ensure adequate stocks of insecticides are available
- Provide the local Biosecurity Officer with information on emerging threats (ie. increases in numbers of enquiries, areas of significance, details of species, densities and control operations)
- Liaise with neighbouring local governments to facilitate locust management at a district or regional scale.

DAF recognises that most local governments do not have large numbers of pest management officers and therefore the capacity to provide coordination may be limited. Nevertheless, in the event of a locust outbreak DAF will not be able to respond to all enquiries, therefore a collaborative effort will be required to minimise the risks of plague development within a local or regional area.

4.4 Locust Oversight Group (LOG)

The purpose of the LOG is to provide information to invested internal and external stakeholders on the locust situation (based on sitreps), facilitate joint decision making between federal, state and local governments and industry with regards to managing the risks posed by locusts, and support response escalation.

Members of the LOG include three nominations from the local government areas that contribute to the PPCF (North, Central and South regions, Appendix 1), Australian Plague Locust Commission, industry and DAF. If a locust response escalates to Stage 3, additional representatives from affected, or imminently affected local governments may also join the LOG.

The primary roles and responsibilities of the LOG are to:

- distribute information to local governments (executive management), agricultural industries and other stakeholders on the current locust situation
- promote vigilance and early control intervention to all stakeholders (general biosecurity obligation)
- assist with the coordination of the stakeholder and communication plan
- provide PPCF funding approval for prevention and operational activities, and escalation of response.

4.5 DAF Oversight Group (DOG)

The DOG consists of DAF executive management personnel and will provide internal governance, financial support and decision making to ensure a consistent approach to the management of locusts and other established pests which have the potential to cause significant agricultural damage within Queensland.

The primary roles and responsibilities of the DOG are to:

- provide oversight and decision making to enable DAF to strategically manage Stage 3 of a locust response
- communicate with State and Federal government counterparts by distributing information and providing oversight on the current locust situation in Queensland
- endorse recommendations from LOG regarding Stage 3 response escalation
- negotiate additional funding arrangements for ongoing response once PPCF exhausted
- negotiate with State and Federal government counterparts for additional staffing and other logistical resources as required
- conduct ongoing review of performance of the locust response including investment, risk management, internal structures and operations
- provide out-of-scope decision making if required.

5 Locust Management and Control in Queensland

The scalable, standardised three-stage process for locust management in Queensland is based on locust density, life cycle (developmental phase) and feasibility of control, and includes triggers for escalation to subsequent stages (Table 1).

TABLE 1: Locust Density Categories, Activities and Responsibilities

Nymphs	No./m²	No./250m²	Activity	DAF Locust response activation levels
Present	1-5	-	Normal population levels – owner or occupier of land to monitor locust activity	STAGE 1 - No Response
Numerous	6-30	-		STAGE 1 - Alert
Sub-band	31-80	-	Preventative control implemented - population levels increasing, owner or occupier of land to report and monitor locust activity and undertake control.	STAGE 2 - Lean Forward <i>Direction given to undertake control actions under P&C Program, potential non-compliance actions</i>
Band	81-500	-	Control required – owner or occupier of land to control bands under Prevention and Control Program (TBC).	STAGE 2 / 3 - Stand Up <i>Direction given to undertake control actions under P&C Program, potential non-compliance actions</i>
Dense Band	>500	-		
Adults	No./m²	No./250m²	Activity	DAF Locust response activation levels
Isolated	-	1-5	Normal population levels – owner or occupier of land to monitor locust activity	STAGE 1 - No Response
Scattered	-	6-25		
Low Numerous	-	26-50		STAGE 1 - Alert
High Numerous	-	51-125		
Concentration	0.5-3	126-750	Preventative control implemented - population levels increasing, owner or occupier of land to report and monitor locust activity and undertake control.	STAGE 2 - Lean Forward <i>Direction given to undertake control actions under P&C Program, potential non-compliance actions</i>
Low Density Swarm	4-10	-	Control required – DAF coordinate strategic aerial control operations	STAGE 3 - Stand Up
Medium Density Swarm	11-50	-		
High Density Swarm	>50	-		

Landholder monitor populations
Preventative control – GBO (monitor, report, control)
Greater than nymph sub bands – landholder / LG control
Greater than adult swarm concentrations – DAF strategic aerial control

Developing locust management partnerships between BQ, local governments and the community is essential to ensure all play a part in preventative control when required to avoid the development of plagues and substantial economic damage.

A summary of activities and responsibilities relating to each of the stages is provided in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: Stages of Locust Management in Queensland – Activities and Responsibilities

Stage 1 - preliminary assessment to identify species, abundance and distribution - key stakeholders include:

BQ (routine locust surveillance, community engagement, extension and sitrep reporting)

Owner or Occupier of Land / Local Government & State land managers (general awareness of local locust populations, reporting of escalating numbers to DAF)

Local Government (extension advice to landholders, local coordination)

LOG (distribute sitrep information to local government and other relevant stakeholders)

DAF Call Centre (customer liaison, community & stakeholder engagement)

Stage 2 – locust response elevation & evaluation of responsibility of control - key stakeholders include:

BQ (routine locust surveillance, community engagement, extension, sitrep reporting, density assessments, recommendation regarding response escalation)

Owner or Occupier of Land / Local Government & State land managers (vigilance, preventative control, reporting of escalating numbers to DAF)

Local Government (extension advice to landholders, local coordination and locust density assessments in response to landholder reports if required)

DAF (locust density assessments in response to landholder reports)

DAF Call Centre (customer liaison, community & stakeholder engagement)

LOG (Lean forward phase, distribute sitrep information to local government and other relevant stakeholders, approve use of PPCF for prevention activities, support recommendation for response escalation)

DOG (distribute information and provide oversight to State and Federal counterparts, authorise use of PPCF)

Stage 3 – DAF incident management & locust response - key stakeholders include:

BQ (routine locust surveillance, community engagement, extension, sitrep reporting, density assessments, participate in response)

DAF (establish response structure – SCC & LCC as required, Stand Up phase, provide briefings to DOG & LOG, sitrep preparation & distribution, response coordination including finance & administration, logistics, planning, WHS, public information and operations)

APLC (based on their Charter, collaborate with DAF on operational control where applicable)

DOG (endorse response escalation & PPCF allocations, liaison with State and Federal counterparts, negotiate additional funding arrangements as required)

Liaison Management (cross-government liaison - industry, other government departments, SDCG & provide feedback)

LOG (authorise LCC establishment, distribute sitrep information to local government and other relevant stakeholders, endorsement of PPCF allocation for operational activities)

Public Information (implement DAF Locust Public Information & Stakeholder Communication Plan)

Owner or Occupier of Land / Local Government & State land managers (vigilance, preventative control, reporting of escalating numbers to DAF)

Local Government (extension advice to landholders, local coordination and locust density assessments in response to landholder reports if required)

5.1 Stage 1 – Preliminary assessment

Stage 1 incorporates routine surveillance undertaken by BQ and initial reports of activity received from stakeholders. The reporting strategy during Stage 1 will ensure that owners and occupiers of land, local government, stakeholders, industry, other relevant government departments and the SDGC are provided with sufficient information and oversight to effectively manage the threat of locusts within Queensland.

5.1.1 Routine locust surveillance

Routine surveillance to monitor for increases in locust populations is conducted by Biosecurity Queensland (BQ) officers in areas where locusts have the potential to impact on agricultural production, predominantly in Central and South-west Queensland. This ground surveillance establishes an index of abundance of locust species within the surveillance area which can be monitored over time. It also enables officers to physically confirm the species and density of locusts.

This routine surveillance is conducted in cropping areas that are susceptible to locust impacts, as well as surrounding areas where locusts may breed and migrate into susceptible areas. Surveillance routes follow roads through high-risk areas and are extensive enough to gain an accurate appreciation of the locust distribution in the area. Routine surveillance by BQ is not conducted on private property.

Locust populations respond to suitable environmental and climatic conditions, and routine surveillance is conducted throughout spring, summer and autumn. Minimal surveillance is undertaken in winter as locusts are inactive and difficult to detect at temperatures below 20°C.

Locusts are examined to identify the species, stage of development, egg development and fat score (required for migration) to assess breeding potential and predictions of future population escalation. All data from ground surveillance is entered into BQ's information management system (BORIS).

A sitrep for each region is prepared at the completion of each surveillance period incorporating maps of the area surveyed, details on the species, density, distribution and stage of development. Relevant information from the Australian Plague Locust Commission (APLC) regarding locust population modelling for the region is also incorporated. These sitreps are distributed by BQ through the reporting structure and system identified in this document for locust responses (through Locust Oversight Group [LOG], DAF Oversight Group [DOG] and the State Disaster Coordination Group [SDCG]). The LOG will then distribute to relevant local governments to assist with preventative control.

This surveillance by BQ is critical as an early warning system alerting owners and occupiers of land and other stakeholders of emergent and increasing population numbers, as reporting by owners and occupiers of land is generally poor until reasonable densities of nymphs or adults are present.

5.1.2 Stage 1 Preliminary Assessment - Triggers

a) Reports and/or routine surveillance indicates emerging locust activity in the landscape?

Yes – go to **b)**

No – no escalation, reports entered into BORIS, extension activities, fact sheets, sitreps prepared and distributed

b) Is the locust species one of the three species of concern identified in the policy?

Yes - go to **c)**

No – no escalation, reports entered into BORIS, extension activities, fact sheets, sitreps prepared and distributed, report to DOG if report is atypical (species, distribution, density etc)

c) Do the locusts potentially threaten strategic cropping regions of Queensland?

Yes – go to **d)** – **Stage 2**

No - no escalation, reports entered into BORIS, extension activities, fact sheets, sitreps prepared and distributed, locust surveillance program continues as part of BAU (IP&A, BQ).

5.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities Stage 1

Agency	Responsibility	Stage	Action
DAF / BQ	BAU locust surveillance and monitoring Coordination of local locust reports	1a-c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - routine transects surveyed (spring, summer, autumn) in priority areas, locust populations monitored - determine geographic extent of locusts and indicative population stages and levels - distribute extension materials including fact sheets and details on control options as required - stakeholder engagement - reports and maps entered into BORIS - preparation of sitreps for submission to LOG - promote vigilance and early control intervention
DAF Call Centre	Customer liaison	1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - scripts provided to Call Centre (reference to online extension materials) - record details of customer enquiries, pass onto BQ
Owner or Occupier of Land / Local Government & State land managers	Monitoring and preventative control	1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor local locust populations - undertake preventative control as required - provide details of emerging populations to BQ/DAF
Local Government	Landholder coordination & extension	1a-c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide extension materials including fact sheets and details on control options to landholders, rural merchants and other stakeholders as required - promote vigilance and early control intervention - provide details of emerging populations to BQ/DAF - facilitate local coordination of control activities as required
LOG	Invested internal & external stakeholders - support for response escalation	1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - distribute sitreps and other pertinent information to LG executive management and other stakeholders - promote vigilance and early control intervention - approve use of PPCF for prevention activities
DOG	Internal Governance	1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide information and oversight to State and Federal counterparts as required

5.2 Stage 2 – Evaluation of Responsibility for Control

During Stage 2, DAF and other trained officers (including local government) may undertake site visits (private and public land) to assess locust population densities, provide recommendations on control options, and potentially endorse escalation to a Stage 3 incident management and locust response.

5.2.1 Stage 2 Responsibility for control - Triggers

d) As assessed by trained local DAF/LG officers, or via ground / aerial surveillance, are the locust densities:

within normal population levels (**green**) - go to **e)**

sub band nymphs or concentration adult's (**orange**) - go to **f)**

greater than sub band nymphs or concentration adults (**red**) – go to **g)**

Nymphs	No./m²	No./250m²	Activity
Present	1-5	-	Normal population levels – owner or occupier of land to monitor locust activity
Numerous	6-30	-	
Sub-band	31-80	-	Preventative control implemented - population levels increasing, owner or occupier of land to report and monitor locust activity and undertake control.
Band	81-500	-	Control required – owner or occupier of land to control bands under Prevention and Control Program (TBC)
Dense Band	>500	-	
Adults	No./m²	No./250m²	Activity
Isolated	-	1-5	Normal population levels – owner or occupier of land to monitor locust activity
Scattered	-	6-25	
Low Numerous	-	26-50	
High Numerous	-	51-125	
Concentration	0.5-3	126-750	Preventative control implemented - population levels increasing, owner or occupier of land to report and monitor locust activity and undertake control.
Low Density Swarm	4-10	-	Control required – DAF coordinate strategic aerial control operations
Medium Density Swarm	11-50	-	
High Density Swarm	>50	-	

e) Locust control responsibility remains with the owners and occupiers of land GBO

- Locust surveillance program continues as part of DAF BAU (IP&A, BQ)
- Promote GBO and locust identification and control options
- Sitreps prepared for LOG

f) Locust control responsibility remains with the owners and occupiers of land GBO

- Locust surveillance program continues as part of DAF BAU (IP&A, BQ)
- Promote GBO and locust identification and control options
- Directions to undertake control actions (under DAF Prevention & Control Program for locusts) could apply to owners and occupiers of land, possible actions for non-compliance
- Sitreps prepared for LOG
- LOG activated to Lean Forward phase

g) Do the locusts pose a significant biosecurity risk to warrant intervention by DAF under the Prevention and Control Program or the APLC?

Yes - go to **h)**

No – go to **f)**

5.2.2 Roles and Responsibilities Stage 2

Agency	Responsibility	Stage	Action
DAF / BQ	BAU locust surveillance and monitoring Coordination of local locust reports	2d-f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - routine transects surveyed (spring, summer, autumn) in priority areas, locust populations monitored - determine geographic extent of locusts and indicative population stages and levels - property visits to assess species, density and distribution of locusts - distribute extension materials including fact sheets and details on control options as required - stakeholder engagement - reports and maps entered into BORIS - preparation of sitreps for submission to LOG - promote vigilance and early control intervention - implement compliance activities (as required) under Prevention and Control Program
DAF Call Centre	Customer liaison	2e-f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - scripts provided to Call Centre (reference to online extension materials) - record details of customer enquiries, pass onto BQ
Owner or Occupier of Land / Local Government & State land managers	Monitoring and preventative control	2e-f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor local locust populations - undertake preventative control as required - provide details of emerging populations to BQ/DAF
Local Government	Landholder coordination & extension	2e-f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide extension materials including fact sheets and details on control options to landholders, rural merchants and other stakeholders as required - promote vigilance and early control intervention - provide details of emerging populations to BQ/DAF - property visits to assess species, density and distribution of locusts (if required) - facilitate local coordination of control activities as required
LOG	Invested internal & external stakeholders - support for response escalation	2e-g	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - activate to Lean Forward phase - distribute sitreps and other pertinent information to LG executive management and other stakeholders - promote vigilance and early control intervention - approve use of PPCF for prevention activities
DOG	Internal Governance	2e-g	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide information and oversight to State and Federal counterparts as required

5.3 Stage 3 – Incident Management and Locust Response

Stage 3 is triggered when population densities indicate that localised control by landholders is no longer feasible, and there are significant risks of plague development and migration to (or within) the strategic cropping regions of Queensland.

5.3.1 Stage 3 Incident Management and Locust Response

h) Is the location within the joint operations area of DAF and the APLC?

Yes – go to **i)**

No – go to **j)**

i) Will the APLC be undertaking a joint response with DAF as per their charter?

Yes – incorporate APLC into DAF response and collaborate on control and engagement activities

No – go to **j)**

j) Does the LOG recommend commencement of a DAF incident response (considering threat, strategic benefit, feasibility of control, potential effectiveness, likely costs, resources required), and has the Chief Biosecurity Officer (DOG) approved funding through the Pest Plague Contingency Fund?

Yes – go to **k)**

No – got to **f)**

k) DAF to move to Stand Up phase. Refer to the Policy, Locust Operations Manual and engage DAF Biosecurity Emergency Operations Management unit and utilise documentation to support development of control centre framework as required.

5.3.2 Roles and Responsibilities Stage 3

Agency	Responsibility	Stage	Action
DAF / BQ	BAU locust surveillance and monitoring Coordination of local locust reports	3h-k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - routine transects surveyed (spring, summer, autumn) in priority areas, locust populations monitored - determine geographic extent of locusts and indicative population stages and levels - property visits to assess species, density and distribution of locusts - distribute extension materials including fact sheets and details on control options as required - stakeholder engagement - reports and maps entered into BORIS - preparation of sitreps for submission to LOG - promote vigilance and early control intervention - implement compliance activities (as required) under Prevention and Control Program - collaborate with APLC on joint response, operational control and engagement activities as required - establish LCC and move to Stand Up phase - provide briefings to LOG and DOG on operational awareness, - advise LOG of ongoing operational activities that require financial allocation from the PPCF
DAF LCC Public Informaiton	Stakeholder engagement	3k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - scripts provided to Call Centre (reference to online extension materials) - record details of customer enquiries, pass onto BQ - Implement the DAF Locust Public Information and Stakeholder Communication Plan
LOG	Invested internal & external stakeholders - support for response escalation	3k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - authorise establishment of LCC and officially appoint LCC Controller - distribute sitreps and other pertinent information to LG executive management and other stakeholders - promote vigilance and early control intervention - provide support for operational activities that require financial allocation from the PPCF
DOG	Internal Governance and financial decision making	3j-k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide information and oversight to State and Federal counterparts as required - endorse LOG recommendation regarding response escalation - CBO to approve funding for response via PPCF - negotiate additional funding arrangements once PPCF exhausted - negotiate with State and Federal counterparts for additional staffing and other logistical resources as required

DAF Liaison Management	Cross-government liaison	3j-k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - distribute sitrep to DES, industry and State Disaster Liaison - provide feedback of concerns or suggestions from stakeholders (industry, local governments, other government departments, State Disaster Liaison) - provide information and oversight to State Disaster Coordination Group
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5.4 State Disaster Framework implementation

If locust populations escalate beyond the capability of DAF to undertake effective control, and/or the impact of the locust plague is causing a necessity or reason to declare disaster powers to prevent and/or minimise loss of human life, illness or injury to humans, property loss or damage or damage to the environment, then a State Disaster response framework approach to locust control may be considered. At this point a disaster event may be declared by the District Disaster Coordinator, with the approval of the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, for a disaster district or part of a disaster district. The Minister and Premier may make a disaster declaration for the state, or part of the state. The circumstances in which declarations can be made and the arrangements for establishing them are specified in the Disaster Management Act 2003. Provisions regarding disaster management powers and how they may be exercised are also included in the Disaster Management Act 2003.

6 Public information and stakeholder communication

Once significant locust activity is confirmed, the DAF public information and stakeholder communication plan for plague locusts will be activated in conjunction with the DOG, the LOG, and other relevant stakeholders (including local governments and Queensland Department of Environment and Science).

Owners or occupiers of land will be kept informed of locust densities, distribution and control operations through regular media briefings including radio, print and social media. The messaging will be provided in accordance with the stakeholder and communications plan.

Liaison (State Disaster), LOG and DOG will provide information and oversight to industry, other relevant government departments and the SDCG through all stages.

The DAF call centre and BQ will provide a customer liaison function and disseminate fact sheets, respond to customer enquiries, and undertake media liaison (in coordination with liaison management) during stages 1 and 2. With the establishment of a formal LCC in Stage 3, the Public Information function will undertake these roles, additionally notifying landholders regarding low-level aerial surveillance and treatment and organising workshops and training sessions.

7 Plague Pest Contingency Fund (PPCF)

DAF administers the PPCF, which is a component of the Land Protection Fund (LPF) established under the Act. The purpose of the LPF is to provide for activities that assist local government manage invasive animals (s57 of the Act), including acting under a Biosecurity Program for invasive animals (such as locusts) in the local government area (s57(2)(d) of the Act).

The PPCF ensures that reasonable resources are immediately available to the department for the coordination of locust control in situations where there is a significant strategic benefit to the State.

Funds for locust control are only to be used for the three economically important species. Surveillance and control of other locust and grasshopper species must be funded from other sources.

Response operations undertaken by DAF will be funded from the PPCF until the fund is exhausted. Funding for prevention activities (Stages 1 and 2, including training and extension materials) will be authorised by a DAF member of LOG (based on financial delegation), and approval for ongoing operational activities in Stage 3 will be provided by the Chief Biosecurity Officer (CBO), a member of DOG.

Subsequent expenditure will be sought by DOG from DAF's own sources and/or from Treasury allocations. DAF will follow normal business procedures and processes for the expenses incurred.

The PPCF will cover the cost of:

- aircraft and associated costs used for locust monitoring and control,
- insecticides used by DAF for locust control,
- costs associated with the delivery of locust management training by DAF,
- costs associated with the development of extension materials,
- costs associated with the maintenance of expertise, including training and exercises, for DAF officers and key stakeholders,
- travel, allowances and accommodation incurred by DAF officers involved in Stage 3 response operations, including vehicle hire, and
- the purchase, maintenance and repair of equipment specific to locust operations.

The PPCF will not be used for:

- annual contributions to the APLC,
- routine on-ground surveillance and monitoring, including costs of vehicles already funded by DAF,
- employee expenses (other than allowances and accommodation mentioned above),
- direct payments for insecticide or application costs incurred by owners or occupier of land,
- in-crop control of locusts for solely private benefit, and
- any costs incurred for a Stage 3 locust response outside of the areas of the local governments that contributed to the PPCF (Appendix 1) unless there is a direct threat of migration to these areas.

Appendix 1 – Local Government’s contributing to the Plague Pest Contingency Fund

