

NFFC Communique

MEETING 26, 23-24 JUNE 2021

The 26th meeting of the National Fruit Fly Council (the Council) was held on 23-24 June 2021. Due to COVID-19 and its ongoing impact on interstate travel, Council members were invited to attend either face-to-face in Loxton, South Australia, or virtually via Microsoft Teams.

Current fruit fly issues

The Council considered several fruit fly issues in Australia, including updates on the South Australia and Western Australia fruit fly outbreaks; the expected renewal of the Exotic Fruit Flies in the Torres Strait Response Program; export trade issues; the Australian government's Smart Fruit Fly Management measure; and the Australian Fresh Produce Alliance's fruit fly interests.

2021 National Fruit Fly Symposium

The Council hailed the 2021 National Fruit Fly Symposium as a success. Over 400 participants from a range of backgrounds including industry leaders, government representatives, researchers and growers took part in the three-day event, where discussions were around the theme *Building Future National Success*. The event featured 39 speakers, 7 panel discussion sessions, 18 live Q&A sessions, and 8 live polls, which signalled a solid sign of interest from stakeholders to find solutions to fruit fly issues.

Notably there were repeated calls for the development of a stronger national approach and commitment to fruit fly management and for investigation into sustainable funding options for the national system. The Council intends to use the outcomes from the symposium to guide deliberations on priorities and as a basis for advice to stakeholders on key issues.

National Fruit Fly Strategy

- **2020-2021 Implementation Plan**

The Council acknowledged the substantial progress made in the first twelve months of the Strategy, as demonstrated in the 2020-21 National Fruit Fly Strategy Implementation Plan Progress Report (the progress report), which has been a collective effort from many different stakeholders. The progress report will be published on the [Prevent Fruit Fly website](https://www.preventfruitfly.com.au) and distributed to key stakeholders at the end of July.

- **2021-2022 Implementation Plan**

A draft 2021-22 Implementation Plan was considered by Council, noting that it contained input from key stakeholders on planned fruit fly activities for the financial year ahead. The plan was commended, and Council welcomed the input that was being sought from a broader range of stakeholders including industry and grower groups.



- **Prioritisation exercise**

In the last twelve months, the Council has engaged with a wide variety of stakeholders across Australia on fruit fly issues. From these engagement opportunities, a common set of high-level strategic activities have been identified as priorities for the national fruit fly system.

The Council conducted a prioritisation exercise to ascertain the key priorities deemed important for strengthening the national fruit fly system over the next financial year. As an advisory body, the Council will seek to monitor and influence progress against these priorities in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Regional engagement

Representatives from the Riverland Fruit Fly Committee, PIRSA's Riverland Outbreak Response Team and Steritech were invited to a 'meet and greet' with the Council. Industry attendees joined the Council for afternoon tea before participating in an information exchange with the Council. Council members were also advised about the issues facing the South Australian pest free area in the current outbreaks and the desire for investigation into mechanisms of support, including the use of Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) to sustain area freedom. Of particular benefit was the insights provided by industry Council members to the visitors on strategies to manage fruit fly technical and community challenges.

Council members in the Riverland visited the SIT release coordination centre for the current outbreak and were impressed with the efficiency that had been achieved in a short space of time to activate this effective outbreak management tool. A visit to Costa Group's Agriexchange citrus pack-house also provided an insight into the industry impacts resulting from a fruit fly outbreak in a Pest Free Area and the cost and adaptations necessary to continue business under new conditions.

Future of the council

The current funding term for the Council ends in October 2021. In-principal agreement for a high-level proposal for Phase 4 of the Council was acknowledged during the meeting, noting the suggested changes to the composition of the Council, and strengthening of engagement structures and platforms, particularly for trade and research issues.

Plant Health Australia will work with stakeholders to further shape a proposal for consideration by Hort Innovation and governments, as funders of the Council contract.

Next meeting

The next Council meeting (Meeting 27) will be held at the end of September. The location of the meeting will be dependent on COVID-19 and its associated restrictions at that time.

