

NFFC Communique

Meeting 29, 14 March 2022

The 29th meeting of the National Fruit Fly Council (the Council) was held on the 14th & 15th of March 2022. Due to COVID-19 and its ongoing impact on interstate travel, Council members attended virtually via Microsoft Teams.

State of Fruit Fly in Australia

South Australia

South Australia has seen several outbreaks of both Queensland Fruit Fly and Mediterranean Fruit Fly over past years; many of these outbreaks (metro Adelaide region) have now been declared resolved and eradicated, however, some remain ongoing. Under the National Fruit Fly Management Protocols, the new date for release for those regions is the 25th of October 2022.

Tasmania

Tasmania's Securing our Borders initiative is progressing smoothly and will continue until the end of May 2022, though inspections occur throughout winter at a lower intensity.

Additionally, from the 14th of January, Tasmania has revoked its import requirement 43 (*Fruit Fly Host Produce - Preharvest Treatment and Inspection of Stone Fruit, Pome Fruit, Persimmons and Blueberries*) along with the acceptance of the corresponding ICA21. Alternative import requirements remain available for fruit fly host produce to enter the State.

Victoria

Along with Tasmania, Victoria will also cease accepting fruit under ICA21 from April 1st 2022.

In research and development, a biocontrol project which relied on releasing parasitoids in Victoria is progressing well; this falls under National Fruit Fly Intergovernmental Agreement and is its second season of releases. Parasitoid populations show positive signs of proliferation and become established at release sites. Additionally, the state has a biopesticide project that AgriBio in Bundoora delivers. This project shows promise with the number of entomopathogenic fungi isolates, showing that they successfully kill fruit fly larvae in laboratory trials.

Queensland

Despite flooding, surveillance activities for exotic fruit flies are ongoing. The severe weather, particularly in southeast Queensland, has led to site access issues traps being damaged or missing; The state is now undertaking a program to replace these missing and damaged traps.

The Torres Strait Exotic Fruit Fly Eradication Program completed recruitment for a full-time coordinator, with the successful applicant contracted until 30th June 2026.

Western Australia

Under the Strengthening Australians Fruit Flies Research Program, led by Queensland, Western Australia is looking into biologically-based entomopathogenic fungi to control Mediterranean Fruit Fly. Field cage trials are expected to commence shortly.



New South Wales

The certification of Stone Fruit under ICA21 will cease on April 1st, with industries advised that their accreditations will be cancelled on that date. NSW Department of Primary Industries is exploring providing additional data to importing states supporting continuing trade for blueberries under ICA21. There has not been a recorded incident of infested blueberries under this ICA.

The state is recording high numbers of Queensland fruit flies which is not unexpected given the severe weather resulting in high humidity; the numbers are expected to peak in March, with Broken Hill recording high numbers for a second season. Work is continuing with Local Land Services and growers to prepare for the season and is running a two-day information session aimed at the backyard or local grower. These sessions are expected to occur in Wentworth, Buronga, and Griffith.

Industry

Citrus Australia and their growers have had a challenging year, with the outlook for the next 12-18 months continuing in this trend. Many difficulties can be attributed to increased expenses for commodities such as fuel and fertiliser and abnormal weather.

The cherries season has concluded, with fruit fly pressure broadly presenting at the latter end of the season. There was also a prolonged wet season which led to a late harvest resulting in fruit being left behind and worker shortages. Cherry growers have seen much of the same complications as citrus and mangoes; with rising prices and PFA complexities, many growers are now experiencing hardship leading to an inability to implement post-harvest reviews and a reluctance to spend additional money on chemicals; this is also compounded by the lack of preferred chemicals available on the market.

Fruit Fly Projects

Update on DAWE Fruit fly engagement and extension project

Christina Cook (consulting to PHA) presented an update on the Fruit Fly Engagement and Extension project being delivered by PHA on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Water, and the Environment (DAWE). The project runs throughout 2021-22 and seeks to leverage the Council's well-developed stakeholder networks and existing national communication channels to progress key fruit fly issues.

The fruit fly engagement and extension project continues to progress well against the four themes. Christina updated the Council on the critical upcoming milestones and updated products likely to be produced for dissemination.

Update on International Symposium on Fruit Flies of Economic Importance

Dr. Polychronis Rempoulakis was welcomed to Council to inform the NFFC about the progress in organising the 11th International Symposium on Fruit Flies of Economic Importance.

NSW DPI hosts the 11th International Symposium on Fruit Flies of Economic importance (11th ISFFEI) in Sydney, 13-18 November 2022. The meeting venue will be at Macquarie University; further details are available in the second announcement and on the symposium website. These symposiums have been organised since 1982, running every four years.

The symposiums traditionally attract more than 300 scientists, plant protection officers, students, and other stakeholders from over 60 countries worldwide. Participants exchange knowledge and experiences on fruit flies' biology, ecology, and area-wide management. This results in discussions, technological developments and international collaboration regarding these critical agricultural pests and the strategies to control them in a sustainable manner promoting global trade and rural development.

The meeting program is comprised of 10 sessions, from basic science to social and economic issues. Each session includes keynote speakers, oral presentations, and posters. Further, satellite events and technical tours related to the biosecurity system of Australia will be organised. Additional information for mail list subscription, registration and abstract submission can be found under <https://www.11isffe.com>.

Council Meetings

The Council's next meeting will be held in Brisbane on the 15th of June 2022.

