



Minister Steve Whan

Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Rural Affairs

MEDIA RELEASE

Battlelines drawn for spring locust war: Whan

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The final touches have been made to the State Government's \$18.5 million attack plan for what is predicted to be the worst plague locust outbreak in at least 30 years, Minister for Primary Industries, Steve Whan, said today.

"Warmer than usual temperatures in the west of the State have experts predicting locust hatchings a week earlier than forecast, so it's reasonable to expect first hatchings around Warren, Coonamble, Brewarrina and Bourke by mid August," Minister Whan said.

"Today marks the beginning of the official campaign – I have received a briefing from the Plague Locust Commissioner at Plague Locust State Coordination Headquarters and I am confident we are ready and battlelines are drawn.

"Surveillance, mapping, logistics and co-ordination teams are finalised and ready and regional control centres at Dubbo and Wagga Wagga are on standby with insecticide stocks ready to be deployed.

"However, to successfully minimise the impact of the plague we need an effective coalition of forces and that's why today I call on the State's farmers and land managers to join us and play their part.

'It is in everyone's interest to be prepared, check for locusts, report sightings to their Livestock Health and Pest Authority (LHPA) and treat hatchings when young locusts band together, it is basically impossible to effectively treat swarms.

"The NSW campaign will be overseen by the Plague Locust Management Group which includes representatives from Industry & Investment NSW, LHPAs and the NSW Farmers Association to ensure we have input from stakeholders.

"Farmers and land managers will need to regularly check their properties for locusts emerging from the soil, young locusts sheltering in pastures and crops, and dense bands of locusts devouring their way through any green growth in their path.

"It will be critical that known egg beds and anywhere swarms were seen in autumn are monitored. It is also worth contacting your local LHPA regarding expected hatching dates in your district."

The critical points for farmers this campaign are:

- Check spray equipment so when locusts are found there will be no delays treating them;
- Chemical is available from your local LHPA;
- Report sightings and hatchings immediately to help inform the overall campaign;
- Treat locusts when they are banding, this is the most efficient and effective time; and
- Check crop and pastures thoroughly, not just around boundaries.

"Past campaigns have shown that for every \$1000 spent on controlling locusts, at least \$20,000 worth of crops and pastures have been saved," Minister Whan said.
