

Plague preparations on in earnest

A big consideration for many in the broadacre growing regions will be planning for the anticipated locust plague this spring.

“The difficulty is that there’s no way of knowing exactly how severe it may be, and assessing and adjusting plans now can be a complex task,” said Geoff Raymond, Nufarm national business manager.

Locust activity decimated early season winter crop plantings in the Wimmera and Mallee following their migration from Queensland through New South Wales, taking advantage of the vast areas of green fodder courtesy of the extensive summer flooding.

“Cold weather has now stalled locust activity, but adult females have laid eggs across extensive ranges of country and the expectation is that we will face a huge problem in September and October when they hatch as the weather warms up.”

Nufarm are working closely with the relevant authorities and distribution partners to assess and plan for spring requirements.

“We are in regular contact with the national and state bodies of the Australian Plague Locust Commission, and have advised them our lead times for chemical production across the range of products approved for plague locust control,” Geoff explained.

There are a number of products available for plague locust control in Adonis[®], Regent[®], Fenitrothion, Chlorpyrifos and Maldison.

During the last major locust plague in 2005, permits were granted for the use of alpha-cypermethrin products, which includes Astound[®] Duo and Fastac[®] Duo. An emergency use permit is in place to use these products in New South Wales and Western Australia for plague locust control. Other states may be able to follow suit with similar permit applications.

Growers in Victoria can use Astound Duo or Fastac Duo as legislation in that state allows for use as long as the crop is registered and maximum label rates are not exceeded.

“These permits need to be applied for by the relevant state government bodies. Again, we have discussed this with various groups and will provide support to any permit proposals,” he said.

“One of the biggest challenges we are facing is trying to ensure there are enough of the various products available to meet potential spring demand.

“This is something we are working very hard to manage, but it’s a real balancing act. We are doing everything possible to help ensure the right decisions are being made so that we have what’s needed when the time comes.”

An A3 chart detailing Nufarm product registrations for locust and grasshopper control is available, along with industry links and other plague locust information, at www.nufarm.com.au/locusts.
