



David Littleproud MP

Federal Member for Maranoa

Media Statement

December 6, 2017

Biosecurity keeps Granite Belt and South Burnett wine flowing

THE value of biosecurity for our wine industry was highlighted with the release of a new Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) report that assessed the devastating impact a *Xylella fastidiosa* incursion could have on the wine grape and wine-making industries.

Maranoa MP David Littleproud said *Xylella fastidiosa* is Australia's number one priority plant pest and the Federal Government had vowed to protect our South Burnett and Granite Belt wine producing regions.

"While *Xylella fastidiosa* is not present in Australia, it is a major concern as it's already spread internationally," Mr Littleproud said.

"It's important for all Australians to understand the value and importance of biosecurity for the nation and the impact a significant incursion could have.

"Australia's biosecurity system safeguards our industries, environment, plant, animal and human health from significant pests and diseases present in other countries."

Xylella fastidiosa is one of the world's most devastating plant pests and there is no cure. In California, it has caused over \$100 million in yearly losses to the grape industry and on the Italian peninsula of Salento around one million olive trees are estimated to be infected.

It could arrive in Australia on imported plant propagative material or insect vectors.

Australia introduced emergency biosecurity measures in late 2015 to reduce the risk of a *Xylella Fastidiosa* incursion. These measures are in addition to strong biosecurity controls already in place, including offshore testing of nursery stock and plant material coming from countries or regions where *Xylella fastidiosa* occurs and certification that material is free from *Xylella fastidiosa* before it arrives on our shores.

"The South Burnett and Granite Belt regions in Maranoa are an importation part of our nation's wine production as Australia is the fifth largest wine producing country in the world, producing 1.3 billion litres in 2016," Mr Littleproud said.

"About 170,000 people are employed in wine-related industries and the industry contributes \$40 billion to the Australian economy each year so it's important we protect this industry."

“If the deadly plant bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* entered and established in Australia, it would pose a significant threat to the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of Australia’s wine grape and wine-making industries.

“According to ABARES, it could cost our wine grape and wine-making industries up to \$7.9 billion over 50 years.

“Their assessment also found that if the outbreak was contained within one region, the impact on the wine industry would be a fraction of the impact of uncontrolled spread, highlighting that early detection of the bacterium would be vital.

“Assessing the potential impact of biosecurity pests and diseases is important for our future preparedness and in highlighting the significance and value of our biosecurity system for our nation.”

FAST FACTS

- *Xylella fastidiosa* is Australia’s number one priority plant pest.
- It is not present in Australia, but it is a major concern, having already spread internationally.
- Habitat suitability for *Xylella fastidiosa* in Australia is likely to be high. It causes significant environmental and economic impacts.
- In May 2017, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources hosted the 2017 International Symposium on *Xylella fastidiosa*, which brought experts from across the globe together to share knowledge and strengthen Australia’s defences against *Xylella*.
- In 2015, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources implemented enhanced import conditions for a number of plant species to better safeguard Australia from *Xylella*.
- A new Plant Innovation Centre (PIC) was launched at the Mickleham Post-Entry Quarantine (PEQ) facility in November, which will progress improved treatments to help Australia manage the risk of *Xylella*.
- Australian wine exports are forecast to top 800 megalitres, with a value of more than \$2.5 billion in 2017–18.
- Australian wine producers have enjoyed excellent outcomes under the China–Australia Free Trade Agreement, with exports to China increasing from \$364 million in 2015 to \$516 million in 2016.

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