



MEDIA RELEASE

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Action required now to protect crops from fruit fly

As Queensland fruit fly populations begin to build up across north-west Victoria, now is the time for growers to implement season-long control strategies.

About 2,500 fruit flies were trapped in the region from Robinvale down to Swan Hill and the surrounding areas in September this year. This is about half the number of flies trapped during September in the peak fruit fly years of 2015 and 2016.

However, according to entomologist Andrew Jessup, now is not the time to be complacent as numbers can build up quickly.

Mr Jessup said flies trapped in spring were generally those that had survived winter and were looking for food, mates, and fruit to lay eggs in.

“There will be a drop in the number of flies trapped during late October and November as overwintering flies die out, but these flies have already infested fruit,” he said.

“The resulting first-generation adults will emerge in late November to early December, and if not controlled, will cause serious damage to urban fruit and vegetables and commercial orchards that might be being harvested then.”

Mr Jessup said the sooner fruit fly control strategies were put in place, the less of an impact the pest will have later in the season.

“Growers should make sure old traps are still intact and that stored lures and toxicants are within their use-by date,” he said.

“They should also ensure that stored baits and pesticides are still approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, and check that newly purchased pesticides have been approved against Queensland fruit fly for their state and crop.”

To stay informed about fruit fly in the region, growers can subscribe to the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area newsletter at www.pestfreearea.com.au/industry.

Fruit fly control strategies

- Monitoring – check developing fruits for fruit fly sting marks and infestations.
- Trapping – use male and female targeting traps to find out when fruit fly has arrived and if numbers are starting to build up.
- Weekly baiting – use products based on fruit fly food (e.g. protein) and toxicants to control male and female fruit flies.
- Fruit removal – removing trees and destroying fallen and unwanted fruit, including fruiting weed plants, assists greatly in the control of next-generation fruit flies.