Agriculture Victoria has received reports of plague locusts in the Swifts Creek and Omeo regions in recent months.

CURRENT SITUATION

Agriculture Victoria officers are undertaking surveillance in the reported areas to identify the extent and density of Australian Plague Locust (APL) populations in the Swifts Creek and Omeo regions.

Surveillance may include fixed wing and helicopter aerial inspections, and on-ground inspections. Agriculture Victoria officers will inspect private and public land as part of these surveillance activities.

Land managers and owners are reminded to be on the lookout for APL and report any adult swarms, nymphs or hatching nymphs to Agriculture Victoria.

ABOUT AUSTRALIAN PLAGUE LOCUSTS

APL (Chortoicetes terminifera) is the most important pest species of locust in Australia due to the large areas infested, the frequency of outbreaks and its ability to produce several generations in a year.

Further information regarding APL can be found at: http://www.agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/locusts/about/australia

KEY POINTS FOR LOCUST MANAGEMENT

Plan ahead: Do not underestimate the damage from either hoppers or adult locusts on crops or pastures.

Coordinated approach: Locusts know no boundaries. There are three levels of locust control:

- strategic interstate coordinated by the Australian Plague Locust Commission (APLC);
- state level (co-ordinated by state departments); and
- local (landholders).

Effective control on all three levels is vital to ensure widespread plague containment.

Be vigilant: Look for hatchings from early spring. Check the APLC website regularly for updates to the forecast hatching dates for your region.

Insecticide use: Any insecticides must be approved for locust control by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). Landholders also need to be aware of their responsibilities under their own state chemical control of use legislation.
Chemical withholding periods (WHPs): Withholding periods must be observed for grain, hay, pastures, meat, milk or any other production following the use of chemicals to control locusts. Note: all producers need to be aware of Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) and must follow the label requirements at all times.

Minimise damage: Cutting crops for hay or windrowing them in preparation for harvest can minimise locust damage or eliminate the need for chemical control. Baling or silaging crops and pastures before locusts hatch is another management tool.

HOW TO REPORT LOCUSTS

All locust outbreaks, be they adult swarms or hatching nymphs, must be reported immediately to the Agriculture Victoria Locust Hotline 1300 135 559 or by emailing plant.protection@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about locust management, visit www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/locusts.