
Subject: FW: AQIS is too hard to contact [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:COMMERCIAL]

Certainly, use the information as you have indicated. In reflection, I don't think I was clear enough about the issue of not putting contact information on web sites. People change and the people I know move around. As an example, AQIS has just moved their local office from Mareeba to Cairns (~60 km) and I did not know. I tend to use the web quite a lot for locating and relocating people and this is quite hard when contact details are being left off websites. There is only one AQIS Botanist in Cairns as far as I know and there are approximately 10 full time botanists in the private sector, so when it comes to covering ground and looking for weeds, it should be obvious that by their numbers, botanists and other biologists in the non-government sector can cover a lot of ground. So please do not overlook us. I am always keen to find pests as long as I can reach someone who can tell me what to look for. That was my message.

Cheers

Andrew

From: Andrew at Forest Ser
Sent: Wednesday, 2 July 2008 1:36 PM
To: Quarantine Biosecurity Review
Subject: AQIS is too hard to contact

2 July 2008

Hello Biosecurity Review,

I am the fellow who found Electric Ants in Cairns. As you know, Electric Ants are potentially the second worst animal pest after fire ants and if I had not been able to raise the alarm, prospects for their eradication would have been dim. My contribution to biosecurity also extends to weeds and I have identified a number of plants which have since been subject to eradication campaigns.

I am a very busy consultant so I will keep my message short. I can only find and report these major pests if I have the ability to contact key people within AQIS and other biosecurity organisations. I do not get paid to find and report pests. This has to be something that I can do on the back of my main tasks which means that it has to be quick and easy. To do this I need to be able to contact AQIS people regularly and ask them what to look for. They need to have information on hand that they can send me so that I can develop a search image. The second thing that I need is the ability to quickly and easily report plants and animals that I do not know. Should I report that little weed I saw in Weipa which I can't identify but it is obviously not a weed that is important in a mining rehabilitation context so it is not really important to my current work? It could be that new croton weed that is a pest to pastures and cropping so I should report it and it must be easy to do so. So please stop putting up a firewall around the botanists and other biosecurity experts so that nobody with information can contact them. The policy of hiding contact information and making barriers to the exchange of information between AQIS people and external people such as environmental consultants is greating reducing the number of pests that I can search for and report.

Link to Electric Ant info: http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/cps/rde/dpi/hs.xsl/4790_5772_ENA_HTML.htm

Andrew Mitchell

Forest & Sea Consulting
PO Box 43N, North Cairns

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