

## PROTECTING HEALTH AND SAFETY IN LOCUST OPERATIONS

Safety is the number one priority in any emergency operation. This applies to locust control and strict procedures are in place to protect the safety of the general public, operators, staff and contractors or anyone else involved in locust operations.

These procedures are enforced by all government agencies involved and a risk management approach is taken for all activities. If risks cannot be addressed satisfactorily, operations will not proceed.

### **Spraying and public safety**

The safety of the public is critical when controlling locusts.

Spraying of locusts is extremely targeted, and is only undertaken when locusts group together in dense bands. This means insecticides are restricted to small areas rather than broad areas of country.

For any spraying operations, strict procedures ensure public safety, including through the establishment of no-spray zones and buffers around roads, waterways and other public places.

Ground control of “banding” locusts is the most effective and efficient method of control. Aerial control is expensive and far less effective and is only used as a last resort when all ground control options have been exhausted and if the infestation is beyond the farmers’ ground control capacity.

A risk assessment is conducted for any proposed aerial spraying, which includes the identification of sensitive areas such as watercourses, houses, urban areas, roads or other environmentally sensitive areas. Spraying will not proceed if any of these requirements are not met.

Spraying operations are conducted in compliance with DECCW (NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water) and WorkCover regulations which protect the environment and human health. I&I NSW and the LHPAs monitor spraying operations to ensure compliance with these regulations. Industry organisations have increased testing for pesticide residues in food and water in areas where locusts are sprayed to ensure all government health standards are met.

Members of the public should contact their local Livestock Health and Pest Authority (LHPA) for information on local control operations and where and when spraying is being carried out.

I&I NSW also publish a weekly newsletter and issue media updates to inform people of current operations, including major spraying activities.

## **Insecticides**

Only chemical agents approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) are used for locust control in NSW. When used according to the label, products which are approved by the APVMA are safe to use and will not result in contamination of stock, produce or human food.

In approving chemical agents, APVMA take into account a range of factors including chemical residues and food safety, withholding periods, environmental sustainability, and human health and safety issues.

Landholders must follow all label requirements, including adhering to buffers, wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and relevant handling and transport requirements. When supplying insecticides, LHPAs also inform landholders of their responsibility to adhere to relevant MSDSs (Material Safety Data Sheet), withholding periods and permit requirements.

For environmentally sensitive sites – such as organic farms – a biological control agent, sold as Green Guard®, is used. Green Guard® is derived from a naturally-occurring fungus (*Metarhizium anisopliae*) that attacks locusts

## **Health and safety in locust operations**

When controlling locusts, the safety of the user, and the general public, is of the highest priority. Our commitment to safety extends to everyone involved in locust control, and the same strict procedures apply to all activities whether they are office-based or out in the field.

All spraying operators have undertaken current chemical user training as required by the Pesticides Act. This ensures operators are proficient in handling, transporting and using chemicals and relevant equipment in a safe manner.

Operators must wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and follow relevant handling and transport requirements.

Risk assessments must also be undertaken before commencing locust control, including the consideration of potential human health, safety and well-being risks.

Contractors, for both aerial and ground operators, are required to meet strict safety standards and maintain relevant Safety Management Systems.

More information:

- Contact your [Livestock Health and Pest Authority \(LHPA\)](#) for information on local spraying operations, insecticide use and control measures
- For general information on locusts and NSW's control campaign, visit [www.agriculture.nsw.gov.au/locusts](http://www.agriculture.nsw.gov.au/locusts)
- Using [insecticides in locust control](#)
- [Procedures](#) and [policies](#) for locust operations, including aerial operations and spraying
- [PROfarm training and accreditation courses for locust spraying](#)