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Locusts back on the radar: Landholders urged to report

The NSW Farmers' Association is urging farmers to report all locust activity to authorities following a spate of hatchings in the North West of the State.

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie said locusts have again emerged as a potential threat to landholders, and while early intervention in spring stopped locusts swarming, the same level of attention is required now to prevent a locust outbreak.

"Recent rainfall in the North West of the State, particularly around Coonamble, Quambone, Bourke and Louth has been a welcome boost for farmers who are preparing to plant their winter crops, yet has also caused an increase in locust hatchings," Mr Laurie said.

"Some of the hatchings have already reached the banding stage, with bands reported up to one kilometre long.

"It is vital that such bands are treated early so the threat can be managed, and we are urging farmers around the Coonamble, Quambone, Bourke and Louth areas in particular check their properties for locusts and report any activity," Mr Laurie said.

The calls from the Association come as the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and the Australian Plague Locust Commission identify more than 60 locust bands through aerial surveillance.

According to NSW Plague Locust Commissioner Graeme Eggleston, the joint effort by authorities and landholders successfully contained widespread locust activity in the South of the State in spring, with estimates that some \$815 million in pastures and crops were saved.

But as these recent sightings suggest, the threat of a locust incursion is not over yet.

"It is vital that all farmers across the North West, and indeed across the State, report locust sightings to their local Livestock Health and Pest Authority immediately, to ensure control measures can occur," Mr Laurie concluded.

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