

MEDIA RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROTECTION OF THE \$ 10 MILLION CHESTNUT INDUSTRY TO ERADICATE CHESTNUT BLIGHT

The detection of a single tree infected with Chestnut Blight located in the Ovens Valley is extremely disappointing particularly given there has been no infections for the past two years.

“What is most pleasing is the vigilance of chestnut growers in observing their trees and reporting unusual events. This needs to continue through the coming period” said Mr Brian Casey, President, Chestnuts Australia Inc.

A small tree with a canker was sampled and found to be affected by chestnut blight by DNA sequencing. The entire affected section of the trunk was removed for sampling.

Mr Casey said “the Chestnut Industry was most appreciative of the quick action of the Agriculture Victoria Biosecurity Officers have to contain the disease, and the destruction of all host trees within 10m of the infected tree”.

Chestnut production is valued at \$10.5 million (LVP) representing 1,300 hectares containing approximately 200,000 chestnut trees. The industry estimates that with more trees planted, production will rise substantially by 2020.

“Protecting the current industry and the future expansion of the Australian industry from exotic pests and diseases is a high priority for Chestnuts Australia” said Mr Trevor Ranford, Industry Development Officer, Chestnuts Australia Inc.

Chestnut Blight has been under an eradication program in north east Victoria since November 2010. In the pursuit of effectively eradicating the disease Chestnuts Australia Inc is urging all chestnut growers in north east Victoria to examine their chestnut trees for any signs of chestnut blight and report any suspicious symptoms

Mr Ranford said “it is vital to find every infected tree now. With the current weather conditions being favourable, prompt detection and reporting is crucial.”

“Chestnuts Australia Inc is committed to the Chestnut Blight eradication campaign and supports Agriculture Victoria and the Commonwealth Government in their endeavours to achieve ultimate eradication” said Mr Casey

Any suspicious chestnut cankers can be reported directly to Agriculture Victoria Biosecurity Officer Amy Moore on (02) 6043 7900 or 136 186. Suspect chestnut blight detections can also be reported to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

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