Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

Chestnut blight response update

Chestnut conference Beechworth

17 February 2018

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

Delimiting the outbreak

- Chestnut blight was first detected in a sample sent by a grower to Crop Health Services in August 2010 and identified in early September.
- A delimiting survey of 154,000 trees, including oaks and eucalypts resulted in the identification of 9 infected properties
- Chestnut blight was not detected in oaks or eucalypts

Operational Phase
Destruction of chestnut and oak trees

- All chestnut and oak trees within an radius of 100m of infected trees on heavily infested properties.
- A 10m destruction zone applied for properties with single infected trees in later years.
- Destroyed were:
- 5,340 chestnut trees on 14 infected and 4 neighbouring properties
- 2,000 nursery trees
- 38 oak trees
- Ten properties were eligible for Owner Reimbursement Costs (ORCs) - Payments totalled $1.5 million

Trees were removed and burnt to ash

Trees surveyed post destruction

- Each Autumn (within 1km of Infected Properties) =
  - All 6,843 chestnut and 464 oak trees
- Spring surveys: North East Victoria
  - 2011 110,267 trees
  - 2012 69,836 trees
  - 2013 62,000 trees
  - 2014 72.000 trees
  - 2015 60,000 trees
  - 2016 16,554 trees
  - 2017 16,963 trees
- Summer and winter surveys
  - All infected properties and surrounding 100m, 5km surveillance zone centred on Eurobin

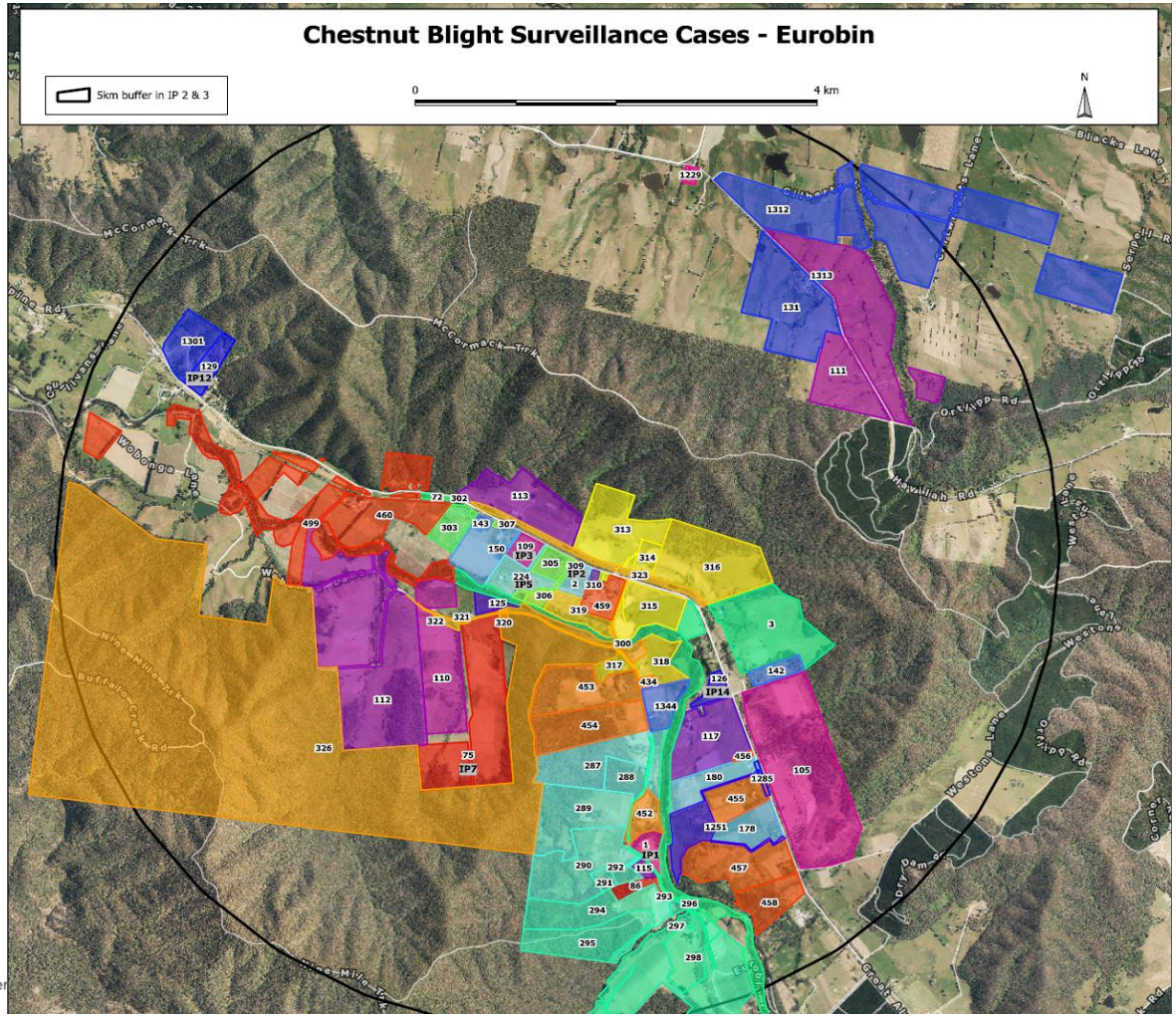
IP14* was found in July 2016,
IP15, IP16 found in September / October 2017

IP = Infected Property

Changes in chestnut blight situation, 2016

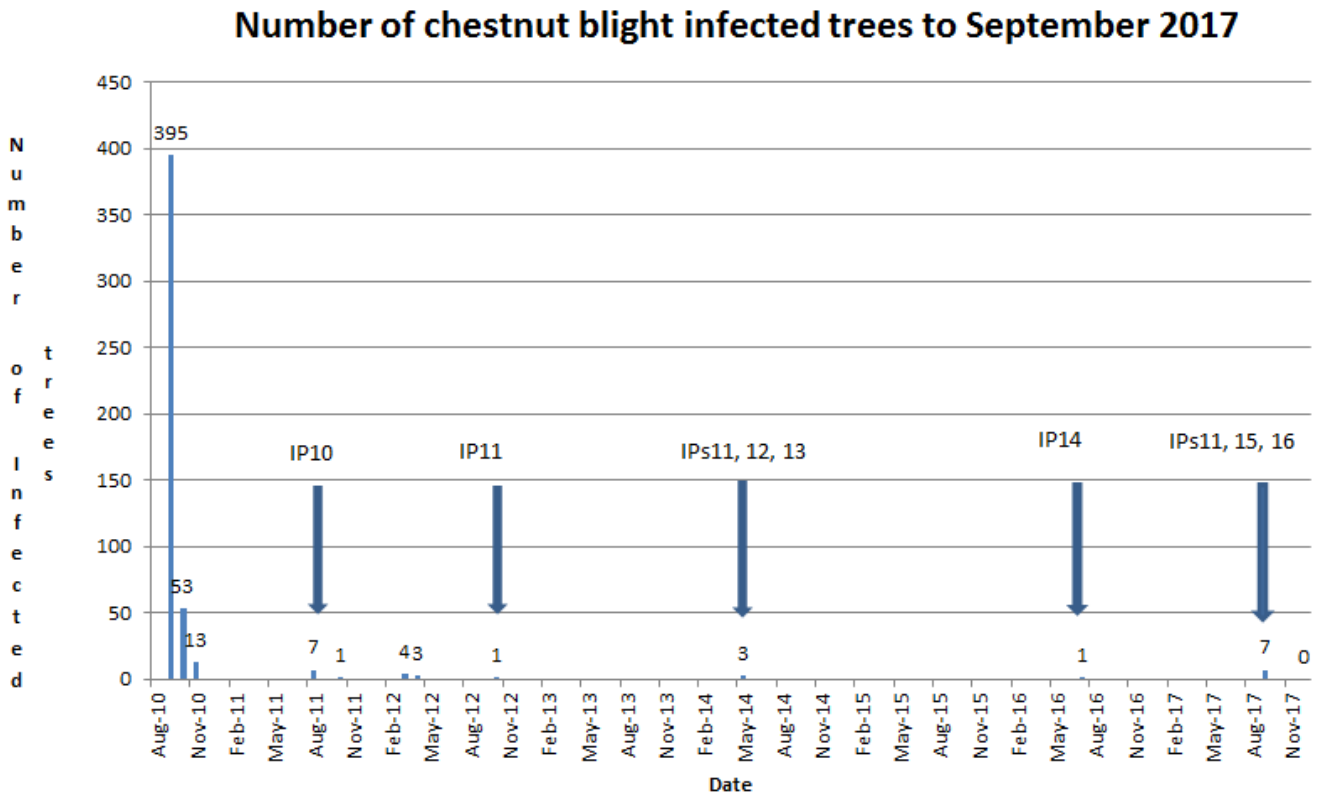
- 2016 was to be the completion of the eradication response
- Discovery of an extra infected property in July 2016 led to a re-evaluation of the response
- R-evaluation of the surveillance strategy
- More focused on the highest density of infected trees
- Surveys on all prior infected properties
- Survey of all hosts within 5km of the highest density of infected trees centred around Eurobin

Eurobin surveillance zone



New strategy locates new infections in spring 2017 surveys

- Two infected trees found on a former infected property
- Five trees found on two newly infected properties in Eurobin



Response to date

- Newly infected trees have been removed
- New national re-evaluation of the response
- New benefit : cost assessment
- Scientific advisory panel advised on key issues on
  - Detectability
  - Possible length of latent infections
- Re-evaluation on a destruction strategy
- Your chestnut blight response committee has been a vital part all national and state discussions
- The response is still under review

Questions relate to this stage of the response

- Proof of eradication surveillance – affected property
  - Are surviving trees on property latently infected
  - Can we detect latent infections
  - If not, what is the best eradication strategy
- How long does a property need to be disease free before it is officially considered uninfected?

Questions relate to the stage of the response

- Proof of eradication surveillance – District
  - After 6 continuous years of disease freedom Beechworth/ Stanley have been excluded from further surveillance and the restricted area reduced to just the Ovens Valley

- Proof of eradication surveillance – Victoria/ Australia
  - Current dilemma
    - Periodic re-appearance of disease
    - Unknown extent of latency period
    - Unknown population of undetected latent infections