

Australia relases 1 billion sterile fruit flies with \$30 M investment to secure Horticulture

08 January 2024 | News

Released over the Riverland as Port Augusta SIT facility reaches major milestone



Released over the Riverland as Port Augusta SIT facility reaches major milestone

One billion sterile fruit flies have now been released over the Australia's Riverland to combat outbreaks in the region following a recent expansion at Port Augusta's Sterile Insect Technology (SIT) facility.

Since September 2023 the facility has doubled its production rate of sterile Queensland fruit flies (Q-fly) from 20 million a week to 40 million a week. The facility has now produced one billion SIT flies since the program started in August 2022.

The program reduces the fruit fly population by mating the sterile flies with wild flies, resulting in no fertile offspring. The \$3 million expansion was funded under the Federal Government's \$30 million Building Resilience to Manage Fruit Fly package, with additional contributions from the Department of Primary Industries and Regions, South Australia (PIRSA) and Citrus SA. The expansion included the addition of separate rooms for each stage of the fruit fly life cycle and resulted in the recruitment of eight new staff.

Fruit flies are one of the world's worst horticultural pest, destroying fruit and vegetables in commercial crops, home gardens and impacting on trade access. Currently there are 47 outbreaks in the Riverland and restrictions remain in place for existing outbreak and suspension areas. In order to reduce the risk of future outbreaks, travelers heading into the Riverland or returning back from interstate trips during the summer holidays are being reminded to abide by the fruit fly restrictions or face a \$414 fine.