



Castlereagh Macquarie County Council

MEDIA RELEASE

RADIO

ABC Western Plains
2WEB
NOW FM/2VM

PRINT MEDIA

Walgett Spectator
Coonamble Times
Gilgandra Weekly
Warren Weekly
Coonabarabran Times

DATE: 22 November 2022

EMBARGO: Nil

CASTLEREAGH MACQUARIE COUNTY COUNCIL ADVISE NOW IS THE TIME TO LOOK OUT FOR ST JOHN'S WORT & ACT

Last season was an extraordinary season for St John's Wort with germination and flowering starting early September to late February, with prolonged wet weather we are preparing for another busy season.

Castlereagh Macquarie County Council Chairman Councillor Doug Batten said 'St John's Wort is spreading in the region, particularly in the Warrumbungle Shire and landholders are urged to identify and control this invasive weed to reduce the impact on their land and the environment'.

He said 'we have known of infestations around Coolah, Merrygoen and east of Coonabarabran for some time, but in the last two years there has been a marked increase with wort spreading through farms, lifestyle blocks and bushland. St John' Wort is actively flowing so now is good time for land managers to identify and control wort on their properties. St John's Wort will quickly takeover pastures and natural areas, particularly in hilly and inaccessible areas and once it takes hold it is very difficult to control'.

St John's Wort spreads easily with sticky seeds that can stick to machinery, livestock or pest animals. The seed can pass through the digestive system and will remain viable. Seed can also spread by water movement or by wind over short distances. The seed may remain viable for up to 12 years.

St John's wort is poisonous to livestock. It contains a chemical called hypericin, which causes photosensitivity. Other symptoms include weight loss, stillbirths and in severe cases, death. Young stock are more susceptible, with suckling stock still effected through the milk of their mothers. St John's Wort will complete with pasture species and can also create a vegetable fault in wool.



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St John's Wort is spreading in our area, so it's important for all land managers to know how to identify it. Land managers should take particular notice in spring as the yellow flowers are easy to spot, even with the tall grass this year. It is worth noting that plants that are less than a year old, will not flower, so you may have young plants present that are hard to spot.

Once you identify Wort, it is important that you control it quickly to prevent seed set. Unfortunately, physical removal is ineffective as new plants will grow from root fragments, in fact Wort can be spread through cultivation.

It is imperative that all landholders remember their duties under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. The general biosecurity duty is all plants are regulated with a general biosecurity duty to prevent, minimise or eliminate any biosecurity risk they may pose. Any person who deals with any plant, who knows (or ought to know) of any biosecurity risk, has a duty to ensure the risk is prevented, minimised or eliminated so far as is reasonably practical.

If anyone has received a biosecurity notice, I urge you to take action or please contact CMCC Senior Biosecurity Officer, Andrea Fletcher-Dawson on 0428 462 060 to discuss a control plan.



St John's Wort

Michael Urquhart
General Manager
Castlereagh Macquarie County Council