Media Release

Willem Westra van Holthe, Member for Katherine
Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries

New assistance package announced for Territory growers

11 March 2015

Northern Territory growers affected by the Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus (CGMMV) will be able to apply for assistance under a new subsidy scheme announced today.

Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Willem Westra van Holthe said the NT Government Interest Rate Subsidy Scheme will provide temporary relief to farmers who are doing it tough.

“We have 11 properties across the NT where the presence of CGMMV has been confirmed,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

“These growers have been extremely co-operative as we work together to eradicate this destructive virus. But with their properties currently under quarantine, these growers are facing financial difficulties in meeting day-to-day operating costs to maintain their farm businesses.

“The NT Government’s subsidy scheme will provide interest rate subsidies to give these growers some breathing room as we work to eradicate this virus,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

The melon industry is worth more than $63 million annually to the NT economy.

Minister Westra van Holthe said he was disappointed the melon industry is not a signatory to the National Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed which would then make them eligible for owner reimbursement under national arrangements.

“That being said, the Melon industry in the Northern Territory has been severely affected through no fault of their own,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

“That’s why the Country Liberals Government is committed to doing its bit to make life easier for affected NT growers.

“The subsidy scheme provides practical relief to growers who have had CGMMV invade their property. It is important to note that this is not compensation, and does not impact the integrity of the National Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed.
“My Department is committed to the eradication of CGMMV and will continue to work with growers to actively manage this outbreak.”

Applications for assistance are expected to be open to growers within the next month.

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