

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 2013**

Question

Would the Minister –

- (a) inform members whether his Department is aware of many examples of Ragwort currently exist in the Island (some on States owned land) and, if so give details; and,
- (b) given that Ragwort and 4 other weeds are defined as ‘injurious weeds’ under the Weed (Jersey) Law 1961 and that the Minister can, if deemed appropriate, serve a notice on a landowner requiring the removal of such weeds, would he advise whether his Department is taking action against landowners in this regard and, if not, whether the Weeds (Jersey) Law 1961 is being upheld?

Answer

- (a) The Department of the Environment maintains a database of areas that have been infected with Ragwort. This enables officers to monitor the sites and advise landowners on future control to prevent the weed’s spread. Ragwort occurs mainly within St Ouen’s Bay, and along the north and south-west coast.

The Department are responsible for over 3000 vergées of public land. Some of this land around Les Mielles, Les Blanchés Banques in St Ouen’s Bay, Noirmont, Gorselands and the North Coast provides ideal conditions for Ragwort.

The Department is committed to reducing the growth of Ragwort on its own land by using a variety of control measures. These include pulling, cutting, grazing and spraying herbicide. To do this work in a cost effective manner, the Department uses TTS tractors, the TTS Ranger Team and the Probation Service. This year, over 700 man hours were used in the control of Ragwort on States land.

This year, the Department used herbicides (mainly through spot treatment) to control the Ragwort in St Ouen’s Bay. This has been effective in greatly reduced flowering and seed dispersal. Some of the weed has already died off and spraying with herbicide will be repeated next year until the amount of Ragwort has been brought under control.

Ragwort remains an important species that is of benefit to the broader environmental. Thus the objective is to reach manageable levels rather than total eradication.

- (b) The Department is committed to upholding the Weeds (Jersey) Law 1961 and has produced a weeds policy to ensure maximum effect given the reduced Departmental resource.

The Weeds (Jersey) Law 1961 is designed to prevent the spread of listed ‘injurious weeds’. These include Curled Dock, Broad-leaved Dock, Spear Thistle, Creeping or Field Thistle

and Ragwort. The Law allows the Minister to take action to prevent the spread of these weeds.

The Department responds to all complaints of injurious weeds. Officers will conduct a site visit and, depending on the severity and location of the infestation, enforcement action will be taken. This action will either be advisory or by the issuing of an enforcement notice. Notwithstanding, any complaint of any injurious weed on grazing land and land adjacent to grazing land will automatically be actioned.

Following all site visits, an advisory leaflet recommending best control methods, including techniques available for organic land, is sent to all landowners.

The Department receives an average of 25 complaints each year, of which around 19 are dealt with through enforcement action.