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211. © The global costs of exotic plants. Gourlay, H. International Plant Propagators' Society, combined proceedings, 2009, 59:92-95. 2010.

The Global Costs of Exotic Plants©

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"If there were no more weeds…we'd be $4 billion richer"
Reported from, *Economic Impact of Weeds in Australia***; CRC for Weeds, 2004.**

COSTS OF WEEDS

The Cost of Weeds to Australia. If there were no more weeds, incomes of Australian agricultural producers would rise, giving 20% of the benefits to food consumers and a saving of $112 million in government expenditure: "Last year Australian bio-control science turned a $4 million investment into a $95 million return…and did the same the year before, and the year before that, effectively all the way back for 100 years. An average benefit-cost ratio of 23 : 1 over that time period is simply a brilliant investment" [The Hon. John Kerin, former federal Minister for Primary Industries, Jan 2006 (Cruttwell McFadyen, 2007)].

The Cost of Weeds to New Zealand. Per annum NZ$40 million is spent preventing their introduction and spread and NZ$60 million per annum is lost in agricultural and forestry production. There are only 10 of us actively working on 15 weed species with a budget of only NZ$1.4 million per year.

These weeds are estimated to be costing New Zealand in excess of NZ$200 million per year.

The ragwort flea beetle (*Longitarsus jacobaeae*) is one agent that has removed ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) from much of New Zealand's pastoral land and is estimated to have saved NZ$17 million per year. (L. Hayes, pers. commun.)

The Cost of Weeds to the United States of America. Weeds in the United States cause major environmental damages and losses adding up to more than US$138 billion per year. One recent study reported that damages from 79 exotic species caused approximately US$97 billion during the period from 1906 to 1991 (Hall, 2000)

Weeds cost many countries around the world millions of dollars in lost production, chemical control, and animal health issues. These costs are not just attributed to the commodity producer but also the food consumer. These figures do not include the loss of intrinsic values, sensitive habitats, or native environments. These costs are incalculable!