



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR BARAMBAH

Hansard 24 November 1999

TICK ERADICATION

Mrs PRATT (Barambah—ONP) (10.23 a.m.): Tick eradication is a major factor in protecting our beef export market. Our live export market for 1998-99 amounted to \$344m. All export beef needs to be free of organochlorine and endosulfan residue. A threat to this million-dollar market is something that we cannot afford. An average of 4,000 head of cattle per month pass through the Wondai clearing dip, with an average of three dippings and two weeks held in yards. Members can imagine the expense for those using that system.

Tick chemical residue is threatening our viability, with a recent reported incident of the issuing of a recall notice by the US Food Safety and Inspection Service for the contaminated Australian beef that was sent to the United States of America. More extensive testing of our beef is proposed by the US and other markets since the US chemical scare. Australia is continually searching for new markets and, with the China opportunity, there exists a demand for strict compliance with Chinese requirements. Those in communication with the Chinese have stated that cattle are sourced from tick-free areas. There is a huge market available, and with the existence of a willingness by producers to be involved in tick eradication, the only obstacle is Government approval. I ask the Minister for new area approval and a further tightening of regulations to complete areas already in progress.

The property owners in the Booie/Wattlecamp, Coolabunia and Moffatdale areas wish to implement a cattle tick eradication program. With continuing delays, the result is that there are now fewer chemicals to effectively kill the ticks and more resistant strains of ticks. Therefore, we need to pursue and eradicate this very costly pest while there are some effective chemicals that still work. I have not yet heard of any new chemicals being developed.

In consultation with officers from the DPI, property owners in those areas have been canvassed within a defined area adjoining the current tick protection area, and support for the scheme is shown to be approximately 90%. There are 94 producers at Moffatdale and 90 at Coolabunia, and 100% of those producers are ready to start. Those concerned need an early consideration from the Minister for the proposed program so that treatment can commence now.

Time expired.
