



Speech by

DESLEY BOYLE

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

Hansard 19 July 2000

MANGOES

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (10.19 a.m.): Some time ago I reported to the House on problems that our tablelands mango growers were having in getting their mangoes to market in Brisbane and in Sydney where there were reported problems with the quality of the product. Consequently, there was a drop in the price, and that causes real difficulties and hardship for those mango growers.

I am very pleased to say that the Minister for Primary Industries and his department have been particularly responsive on this problem and we now have action on three fronts. We are doing some research into the cool chain, as it is called—the process of transportation from the tropics to these southern centres, the ins and outs of cool rooms and whether or not this might in fact be the cause of the problem. We are also improving the quality monitoring program on the tablelands and offering upgrading training to farmers on the tablelands, particularly mango farmers. It does not matter how good a farmer has been, there are always new and better techniques from which to learn.

The other problem that I particularly wish to mention this morning, which has a potential solution in sight, is the selling of our mangoes and other tropical fruit and vegetables overseas. Presently, we have a problem with accessing a number of international markets owing to our disinfection standards, which are not meeting the standards expected elsewhere. However, through discussions with an American company named Surebeam, we have the prospect of using a new process known as electronic pasteurisation, which would solve this problem. That process is worked by concentrating a burst of energy generated by electricity onto products that need disinfestation. However, it is necessary for the Federal Government to investigate and approve this process.

I call on all honourable members of all parties in this House to join with us in asking for cooperation. This is not a matter of politics; this is a matter of potentially millions of dollars in increased exports of our fruit and vegetables.
