



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR BARAMBAH

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DEER FARMING; TIMBER INDUSTRY

Mrs PRATT (Barambah—IND) (11 p.m.): I am told that deer farming is no longer tightly regulated by the Department of Primary Industries. Some deer farms are near or adjacent to tick free or tick-infested country. Without DPI regulations on the permanent impoundment of deer, particularly red deer, the spread of cattle tick is inevitable if deer escape from these farms. Deer travel great distances in a short time, travelling from tick-infested to tick-free country within a few hours. Ticks are spread by illegal movements, the lack of knowledge by stock owners or by deer. The cost of eradication and inconvenience to the producers can be enormous, most of which could be avoided by the DPI using sound administration and commonsense. There will be a cost and some inconvenience to obtain approval to move stock, but with our modern technology of fax and email, the cost and inconvenience would be minimal compared to the cost of eradication.

Cattle tick-free areas of the State must be publicised frequently throughout all avenues of the media as properties change hands regularly, particularly small blocks, and most of these owners are not originally from the land and must be advised of their obligations to the industry. Animals infected by ticks do not thrive. Producers who were against eradicating ticks in the first place but now do so are amazed at how much better their cattle are looking. Due to the draining of their blood by parasites cattle are often weak, and sometimes if infestation is heavy enough they die. If they contract red water, a disease carried and delivered by ticks, they either die or, if treated with Imizol, abort any calves they may be carrying. Hence, one can confidently say that lack of productivity would have been a major contributing factor instigating the eradication programs, both historically and currently. Out of a number of around 20 head, we lost four adult animals and a season's progeny to red water and its treatment.

Move easy waybills must be banned, and anyone moving stock must get a permit from a stock inspector. Move easy waybills are abused by people who are not stockmen or women. What is the cost to a producer of dipping and treating ticks? It averages about \$5 a head. What is the cost to the Queensland beef industry if ticks are allowed to take hold again? Incalculable! Leather scarred by tick bite is rejected. Cattle infected with tick are bypassed at sales for clean cattle. Ticky cattle are always cleaned of ticks before being put in feed lots. Why? Because they cannot do well with their blood constantly being drained. One then has to think of the possibility of thousands of tick-infested animals grazing good grass that could be better used for cattle that will utilise that grass, waste we can ill afford in this drought-prone country.

One could possibly mention the cruelty factor of tick infestation. Infestation means a slow deprivation of an animal's blood supply, or, I suppose more graphically, a slow bleeding to death. It is interesting that I personally have never heard of RSPCA intervention on tick-infested cattle. I have to ask why. The only people who will benefit by allowing the spread of ticks to continue are the chemical companies. One should ask why America decided that they should rid their country of ticks and did so over a period of 100 years in spite of their wild deer. Obviously they thought it destructive enough to warrant that kind of activity. I implore the Minister to enforce the regulation on the containment of deer.

I now turn to the issue of timberworkers' compensation—there are known mills that have not received long-term legally enforceable wood supply agreements of logging allocations at their current rate for the next 25 years. There are now families contracted to these mills who are out of work. Why should the families who have borrowed on what their bank believed was secure long-term employment

be penalised because they were employed by one of the mills which did not get a grant of a long-term contract? A man who found a good, dependable, good paying job was plunged into turmoil with the single stroke of a pen by this Government. John still does not know if he is going to be compensated, when he is going to be compensated or how he is going to be compensated. John's loan repayments equal \$2,500 a month. How are these payments to be made now that John is to be put out of work? Because this Government has taken his job away, can we assume the Government will take responsibility for the position it has placed him in and perhaps repay the loans? I think not.

Because of where John lives, his farm has been drought declared since 1994. John's job in the timber industry has been supporting the farm and John has not received a single cent through drought relief. Now, without the benefit of his timber industry job, who is going to support the property? This Government? I think not. John's wife said to me, "If the Government doesn't properly compensate us, not only are they taking away our job, they'll be taking away our farm, everything we have in one fell swoop." Premier Beattie has stated that any worker who wants a job in the timber industry will have a job in the timber industry. But the question many who work in the industry are asking is this: what kind of job and at what pay?

Mills with a 25-year guaranteed supply already have the staff they need. I ask the Premier urgently to offer some answers to the people in John's position, a position this Government can squarely take the blame for. I ask the Government not to turn its back on them. Do not trample on them and do not belittle their concerns. John had his life mapped out for many years to come. There was no reason that he and the bank should not feel secure in the plans they had made.
