



Speech by

RAY HOPPER

MEMBER FOR DARLING DOWNS

Hansard 5 April 2001

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—Ind) (10.21 a.m.): Pat, if you were a horse I wouldn't get on you.

I wish to speak about the DPI staff, especially those who work in the dairy industry. Our processors, Pauls and Dairy Farmers, contribute towards their wages, and I am sure that they are happy to do so. In the past, DPI staff have helped me personally on my own dairy farm with property plans, cash flows, et cetera. It is a good thing to be able to call on those people.

Dairy farmers are in dire straits, and I am sure that everybody knows what is happening in the industry at the moment. The DPI staff help not only with advice. Those people know each farmer personally. Quite often, they find themselves giving personal counselling. At this time I ask our government to make absolutely sure that the funding be kept available to keep those services available to our struggling dairy farmers.

Twenty years ago, the standard of milk was nowhere near what it is today. I am speaking about the somatic cell count, which relates to mastitis, fat and protein levels, and temperature and bacteria levels in our product. Due to the tireless work of the target 10 officers, our Queensland dairy farmers now produce a quality product level with or better than most countries in the world. It is imperative that those staff stay. I would even suggest that we hire more to help support our dying dairy industry.
