



Speech by

STEVEN RODGERS

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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AGRICULTURAL AND VETERINARY CHEMICALS [QUEENSLAND] AMENDMENT BILL

Mr RODGERS (Burdekin—ALP) (3.01 p.m.): I rise today to speak in support of the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill 2001. As was said by the previous speaker, the member for Charters Towers, one of the things that is helping us to make a success of the Burdekin area is the aquatic weed harvester which recently arrived in the area.

As the minister indicated in his second reading speech, this bill seeks to remove the doubt caused by the recent High Court decision. In essence, the High Court decision has made it necessary for every Australian jurisdiction, including Queensland, to provide for the special conferral of powers to Commonwealth officers of the National Registration Authority, the NRA, for agricultural and veterinary chemicals. The NRA is responsible for administering a single national registration scheme for agricultural and veterinary chemicals. The NRA evaluates, approves and controls the supply of active constituents for the manufacture and supply of agricultural and veterinary chemicals.

The NRA received its full powers with the passage of Commonwealth legislation in the early 1990s, and complementary state and territory legislation enabled the commencement of the national registration scheme. The national registration scheme provides for the NRA to control agricultural and veterinary chemicals up to and including the point of sale. Recent approvals by the NRA for chemical usage in Queensland include the issue of emergency permits for the use of three new ant bait products as part of a fire ant eradication campaign. The chemicals are applied as a bait which is carried back to the nest by worker ants and fed to the queen for larvae. It includes the issue of an emergency permit for the use of new chemical fungicides in the eradication campaign of the black sigatoka disease found in banana plants in the Tully Valley in far-north Queensland. It also includes the issue of an emergency use permit for the pesticide Confidor to help control Australia's worst sugarcane pest, the greyback cane grub. In my electorate of Burdekin it has impacted on the crops quite dramatically. Confidor has helped to contain that to a certain extent but still does not resolve the issue.

Indeed, as the NRA annual report in 2001 says, 'The work of the NRA safeguards the health of the people, animals and the environment, and international trade.' This bill will ensure that the national registration scheme is on a more secure constitutional footing in the wake of the High Court decision. The bill will do this by ensuring that no duty, function or power conferred on a Commonwealth authority or officer is beyond the legislative power of the state. Therefore, this bill is in the best interests of the industry and the wider community. I commend the bill to the House.
