



Speech by

Mr D. BRISKEY

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

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AGRICULTURAL AND VETERINARY CHEMICALS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (2.46 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill seeks to amend two statutes relating specifically to the Primary Industries portfolio, namely, the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966 and the Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988. As the minister mentioned in his second reading speech, the bill will give effect to a number of recommendations to come from the NCP review of agricultural and veterinary chemicals legislation, an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments that has the support of all states and territories. Indeed, the recommendations gave the minister the imprimatur to bring this bill to the House.

At the outset, I mention the innovative work being carried out by the Redlands research station in my electorate of Cleveland. Department of Primary Industries researchers and employees have been responsible for a number of advancements across a number of sectors in recent years. Their work with the amenity horticulture industry in particular leads the country. The amenity horticulture industry is worth \$1 billion to the Queensland economy each year and is growing rapidly.

Earlier this year the Beattie government granted funding of \$1.2 million to the first stage of development of the DPI's Redlands technology park located at the research station. The technology park is set to position Queensland as a national leader in environmental and amenity horticulture. This translates to economic benefits and jobs for Queensland. Some of the innovative research currently being undertaken at the Redlands technology park includes improved waste water use by local governments, breeding and collection of novel native turf species for main roads, new saline tolerant grasses for coastal parks, new turf cultivars for the international horse racing industry, improved management of sports fields for the Australian Football League, production systems for new pharmaceutical biocompounds to support cancer research, and web based information and management systems.

Indeed, on Monday morning this week the minister, the Premier, the members for Redlands and Capalaba and I met on the site and inspected some of the many and various varieties of turf that they are growing and experimenting with at Redlands technology park. Indeed, we looked at a couple of varieties of turf that the AFL is considering for its various football fields around this state. I must compliment the minister and his departmental officers on the work that they are doing in Redlands. It is magnificent work.

Mr Palaszczuk: It is a good location, too.

Mr BRISKEY: It certainly is on that beautiful red soil in Redlands.

A government member interjected.

Mr BRISKEY: He is a fine minister. I take this opportunity to thank the minister for his support of the industry. I know that he has embraced amenity horticulture and its potential benefits for Queensland for a long time now, and because of that we now are starting to see some of those benefits. It is outstanding work.

The Queensland government has a number of programs to reduce chemical usage by the state's farmers. These programs have been instrumental in opening up new markets as well as slashing production costs and, importantly, in benefiting the environment. The honourable members for Redlands and Glass House were only talking about these issues last night very late in the evening over a cup of tea. They are very interested in these issues.

Mr Purcell: That's the first time you put your foot in a hole.

Mr BRISKEY: I was going well until then, was I? The state government's commitment to reducing chemical usage complements its work in developing Queensland's organic food potential. In recent years Queensland apple growers have reduced their total pesticide application by about 70 per cent. Importantly, the sweet corn industry has reduced major insecticide use by about a third. Stone fruit growers have been working with DPI to reduce chemicals used in controlling fruit fly through netting, bait spraying and other control strategies. In partnership with the state government, industry is responding to the demands and expectations of consumers in Australia and overseas.

For instance, a heat disinfestation fruit fly treatment of Queensland's mangoes developed by DPI in partnership with industry has led to more local varieties being accepted by the Japanese market. In addition, the DPI is working to trial the use of netting to grow fruit and vegies without the use of chemicals, as well as assess its effectiveness in excluding fruit flies, flying foxes, birds and hail. These initiatives highlight the government's commitment to reaching Queensland's potential in the global organic food market. Any presence of unacceptable residues of chemicals may result in a loss of these markets not just to Queensland but to Australia. Queensland needs to demonstrate to our trading partners that effective controls over the use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals exist.

This bill represents an ongoing commitment by the state government to protect Queensland's reputation and to meet increasing demands from Australian and international consumers for safe and ethically produced food products. Key amendments within the bill seek to reduce unacceptable residues of chemical products in food and fibre commodities, risks to human health from ineffective treatment of animal diseases, ineffective treatment compromising animal welfare, and potential risks of contamination of the environment from chemicals in animal excretions.

The bill seeks to achieve this by introducing stronger controls on the use and distribution of agricultural and veterinary chemicals in Queensland. Those who use agricultural or veterinary chemical products irresponsibly or in an unsafe manner will face increased penalties for offences under the Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988.

In the past, the penalties have never really acted as a deterrent to those who misuse chemical products. The short-term commercial rewards reaped by the misuse of chemical products was often far greater than the penalties that could be imposed for an offence against the act. Under these amendments, the maximum penalty for misuse of an agricultural or veterinary chemical product is 600 penalty units, or \$45,000. I am confident that this will provide an adequate deterrent to those who may consider misusing chemicals. The penalty is reflective of the government's tough stance on the issue and the commitment to building our good reputation in the global organic food market. I have pleasure in commending the bill to the House.
