



Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Drought Declarations; Vaccinating Stock to Prevent Blackleg

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: Today I can announce that as minister I have approved recommendations to add Barcoo shire in the state's west as well as Cooloolool shire and the southern sections of Tirol shire to the state's drought declared list. With these declarations, together with Inglewood shire earlier this week, there are now 41 shires officially drought declared in Queensland. The area of Queensland covered by shire drought declarations has increased to just over 20 per cent. The declarations are based on the recommendations of the local drought committee. In Barcoo shire the lack of pasture growth has been compounded by the unusually high temperatures from November last year to February this year. These high temperatures burnt off any benefit from storms that went through the shire late last year. There have been 34 individual drought declared properties in the Barcoo shire.

In terms of the Cooloolool and Tirol shires, pasture conditions in the area are very poor as a result of the lack of moisture and dry conditions combined with severe frosts in winter. There have been 22 individual drought declared properties in Cooloolool shire and a further seven individual properties in the area of Tirol shire are now completely drought declared. The declarations in Tirol shire cover the local government divisions 2 and 3.

Under shire and individual property declarations, primary producers have access to freight subsidies on fodder and water, stock returning from agistment and on stock purchased for restocking. There has been some good rain in Queensland this week, but I still expect more drought declarations to be made. The rain has been of great value to many producers, but it has not fallen in all areas or in the amounts that are needed. In some areas, the light falls may ultimately be of more nuisance than benefit without follow-up rains. I welcome the rain that has fallen, but we need more and we need it more often.

I also urge all cattle producers to undertake vaccination of young stock to avoid the consequences of blackleg, a disease which is endemic in Queensland. Blackleg is a disease most commonly seen in young cattle between the ages of 12 and 30 months, particularly weaners. A simple five-in-one vaccination can provide protection to young cattle from blackleg, tetanus, pulpy kidney and other clostridial diseases. Whilst it would normally occur in situations where the cattle are in good feed, it can also result from supplementary feeding of good grain. Once again, I urge all producers to vaccinate their stock. Times are tough enough without losing stock to a disease that is so easily prevented.
