



Speech by

Hon. Tim Mulherin

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Hansard Wednesday, 3 June 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Primary Industries

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (10.12 am): Queensland's billion-dollar primary industries continue to be a success story despite the global financial crisis and uncertainty about jobs. The March 2009 *Prospects update* shows that the state's primary industry commodities are forecast at a net worth of \$13.04 billion. This is a five per cent increase in the total value of Queensland's agricultural sector since last December and includes a gross value of production at the farm gate and first-stage processing.

There have been increases in live cattle exports. The value of wheat and fruit such as watermelons, pineapples and grapes has also increased, while sugarcane, chickpeas and soya beans also recorded an increase. Sunflowers are a more attractive crop than sorghum for producers right now, with sunflowers valued at \$17.5 million, a 17 per cent increase on the December forecast. The gross value of the sugarcane crop has increased by 23 per cent to \$920 million thanks to an expected increase in sugar prices.

Wheat continues to increase in value with an estimated worth of \$520 million, 24 per cent higher than the December forecast. In 2007-08 Queensland farms produced 1.5 million tonnes of wheat, a figure that is expected to rise to 1.82 million tonnes this year. Queensland's beef industry remains the state's largest primary industry and is forecast to increase in value from \$3.39 billion to \$3.46 billion. More beef is reaching the abattoirs because of better than expected conditions after significant rain in the Gulf country and the state's north.

The good news is not limited to cane, grain or beef. There has been an overall increase of six per cent in the value of Queensland's horticultural industry. Mangoes are forecast at \$65 million, table grapes have a value of \$50 million and turf is worth \$81 million. The macadamia industry has recorded three successive years of growth and is now worth \$30 million, an increase of 20 per cent on last year. Combined, the state's egg and poultry industries jumped in value to \$550 million, an overall increase of about 10 per cent. In these tough economic times, our diverse agricultural industries continue to drive our economy and provide jobs for thousands of Queenslanders.