



Speech by

Hon. Tim Mulherin

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Hansard Thursday, 6 August 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Primary Industries and Fisheries

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (10.16 am): As Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries it gives me great satisfaction to report to the House that Queensland's agricultural sector continues to defy worldwide economic trends. I like to call it 'the bloom in the gloom'. The most recent analysis by Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries shows that Queensland's gross value of production is worth about \$13.02 billion for the 2008-09 financial year compared to \$12.4 billion for the previous financial year.

Mr Messenger interjected.

Mr MULHERIN: That is an increase of five per cent on last year. The cotton industry is leading the way, with production tripling in value from \$110 million last year to an anticipated \$340 million this financial year.

Mr Messenger interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable member for Burnett, I could understand your point if you were under some personal attack, but I think it is unnecessary interjection at this point. Let us hear the minister.

Mr MULHERIN: The value of sunflowers has improved by 43 per cent since March due to higher prices and an increase of 48 per cent in the area sown to 26,490 hectares. Our sugar growers should also expect good returns, with the gross value of the sugarcane crop forecast to increase by 23 per cent to \$920 million due to an increase in worldwide sugar prices. The value of Queensland's cattle and calf industry is forecast at \$3.46 billion in 2008-09, with an increase in herd numbers due to favourable seasonal conditions. However, this will be offset by lower prices than last year. Our more traditional crops may have lost some ground due to falling prices. However, last year's results were exceptional, with prices fetching an all-time high. Not all crops have been affected. The gross value of wheat production is \$485 million, which is 35 per cent higher than last year. The value of fisheries has remained steady at \$243 million.

Overall, excellent results have been achieved given the current economic times and investors should continue to look to Queensland agribusiness as a key investment in the future. We are meeting our commitment to grow primary industries in line with the Fresh Approach strategy to achieve a \$34 billion sector by 2020—almost three times today's value.