




Speech By  
**Julieanne Gilbert**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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**AGRICULTURE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (4.57 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Agriculture and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I would like to thank the work of the committee and also Rob Hansen and Megan Johns for their support. Agriculture is an important component of the Queensland economy. In 2014-15 to April 2015, it was valued at \$15.2 billion. My electorate of Mackay relies on the surrounding agricultural industries for employment and income.

Like other industries in Queensland, the agricultural industry is under pressure to continue to diversify and also renew practices to keep up with economic demands to produce more product from the same amount of land. The Premier's recent trade mission is evident of the ever-changing nature and complexity of agriculture. During that trade mission, in Japan the Premier witnessed the signing of an agreement between Asahi Holdings and QUT. This venture will increase the production of sugar and ethanol without greatly increasing the input of sugar. This is an innovative and simple milling process. At the recent estimates committee hearings Minister Byrne also shared with the committee the innovation and development of new varieties of fruits.

Legislation needs to be modernised, simplified and aligned with Commonwealth legislation to allow primary producers to get on with their business of farming without overburdensome red tape or redundant legislation sitting in the background. The bill makes minor changes to legislation that ensures the future security of the agriculture industry across Queensland. Ten acts will be amended to address inconsistencies with Commonwealth legislation and to help clarify and interpret the application of current legislation.

The acts provide for both biosecurity and the protection of animal welfare. As farmers modernise their practices, the types of machinery, technologies and implements have also evolved. This is evident with the use of aircraft, both manned and unmanned, on farms. Amendments to the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966 will bring into line Queensland's licensing framework with current Commonwealth licensing and rating arrangements for aircraft operation. At present there is an approved unmanned drone for agricultural use. It is the Yamaha RMAX helicopter. The current Queensland licensing application for aircraft refers to Commonwealth authorisations which no longer exist.

In Queensland in recent times we have unfortunately seen outbreaks of some exotic diseases in the agricultural industry. The Palaszczuk government takes biosecurity of our agricultural industry very seriously. When there is an outbreak of disease there is a need for a quick and urgent response. The provisions of the Exotic Diseases in Animals Act 1981 need amending. The amendments ensure that a notification of a stated area to be a restricted area for a stated exotic disease can be processed with urgency. Currently, there is a requirement for the notice to be drafted by the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel. This process can be timely. The amendment allows for the issuing of a biosecurity notice outside of normal business hours.

With the Biosecurity Act commencing within 12 months, the bill also provides a timely opportunity to refine a few aspects of the act before it commences. This will provide a seamless transition. The bill also has provisions regarding restricted animal material. For example, it ensures that Queensland continues to support and enact its commitments to the nationally agreed feed bans for ruminants and other animals.

The Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994 needs amending for the use and the transportation of chemicals in Queensland. Chemicals are required to be used in a variety of contexts, including herbicides on weeds and veterinary medicines on animals. The changes will clarify the validity and application of legislative instruments made under the Commonwealth act as laws of Queensland.

The care and wellbeing of animals is a concern for us all. Unfortunately there are times when animals need to be euthanased. The amendments to the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 will give protection to those workers who need to administer chemicals or drugs to animals. These are in three categories: one, an inspector; two, a prescribed entity—being the RSPCA, the Animal Welfare League, those who run animal shelters and officers of local government; and, three, veterinary surgeons, including veterinary surgeon students. Workers in these categories need change to legislation to remove the offence of administering a poisonous or harmful substance with the intent of killing or injuring an animal when administering a drug in the course of their duties at work. The legislation also removes the timely duplication of applications and authorisations to perform their duties.

Amendments to the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 amend, clarify and simplify the terminology relating to identification microchips in cats and dogs. The bill removes inconsistencies that are restrictive to the sellers of permanent identification devices. The bill requires that the device implanted by an authorised implanter be a device that stores the unique identification number for the prescribed permanent identification device. Unfortunately, when dealing with cats and dogs not all pet owners are responsible. There is a problem for landowners in some instances who need to deal with the problem of stray dogs attacking their stock. Landowners need the protection of the amendments in this bill to allow them to destroy stray dogs that have or are about to attack their stock. The bill will insert provisions to protect the landowner from criminal liability or having to pay compensation for the destruction of the dog. The bill also includes provision for protection on stock routes from attack by stray dogs.

The bill also widens its definition of animals protected under the term 'stock' to include cattle, sheep, goats, deer, llamas and horses. The only animals not included are bees, pigs and captive birds. The bill also recognises that landowners may not always be capable of destroying the potential attacking dog or that there may be, in fact, more than one owner. This bill gives clarity to the protection of multiple owners and agents acting for the owners. The amendments in the bill are minor but necessary for the security of our agricultural industry and the protection of the animals. I commend the bill to the House.