




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2016

ADJOURNMENT

Bovine Johne's Disease

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (12.49 am): I rise to speak on an important biosecurity issue and the failure of the Palaszczuk government to properly consult with the 19,000 beef and dairy cattle producers in Queensland on bovine Johne's disease or, as it is more commonly known, BJD. Late yesterday, in the middle of budget week, and after giving producers and industry just two weeks notice, the agriculture minister announced that she was dumping Queensland's hard-won protected zone status for BJD.

The timing of the minister's announcement has been very sneaky. It was timed so that it would be lost in budget week and, ironically, after she and her government issued verbose statements about boosting biosecurity for agriculture, when in this case nothing could be further from the truth.

We have worked hard to establish our \$3 billion-plus beef and dairy industry and to establish our brand as the best in the country and we need to ensure this industry receives the necessary support from government to continue to grow, free from the threat of disease. In ignoring the line being held by Western Australia and the Northern Territory, this Labor government has rolled over to pressure from vested interest groups and southern seed stock breeders and their agents and thrown years of hard work, keeping our herds protected, out the window.

In typical Labor style, there has been no consultation with the broader Queensland beef or dairy industry—none. We have every right to question the decision taken by the minister to get rid of our protected status. Instead of consulting, holding genuine industry meetings and listening, this ill-informed minister has taken the line of least resistance and rolled over to a vocal minority of vested interest groups that have nothing to lose.

At a time when industry needs leadership, the minister has failed to stand up and demonstrate her commitment to our beef and dairy industries. The minister has totally ignored the calls from our dairy farmers, already under immense pressure from the drought and the ongoing battle with the supermarkets and their highly damaging dollar-a-litre milk campaign. The minister has ignored the QDO at a time when they need strong local community and consumer support and, moreover, strong support from the government.

It is incomprehensible that two weeks out from the commencement of the Biosecurity Act and associated regulations our graziers and dairy farmers remain in the dark on how they will manage this insidious disease going forward. When will the minister release the regulations which will set out how the act is to be implemented and applied? We cannot and should not allow BJD back into Queensland and we need to be doing everything possible to ensure we retain our hard-won protected zone status.