




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Toowoomba Region, Agricultural Industry

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (9.46 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to strengthening Queensland's agricultural trade and investment relationships with our key trading partners. The more people living in Asia who consume our produce, the more jobs created in regional Queensland.

Last week I undertook a trade mission to Japan and South Korea—our second and third largest agricultural export markets. It was great to see so many food products grown and processed on the Darling Downs on supermarket shelves in both Tokyo and Seoul. From high-quality beef from Oakey, to orange juice processed in Warwick, to broccoli grown in the Lockyer Valley, the Darling Downs region is an Asian agricultural powerhouse. That means more local jobs for the region.

I was very encouraged that Queensland beef proved very popular in Japan. Preliminary figures value our beef exports to Japan at \$1.39 billion. Of the 76 countries Queensland sends beef to, Japan is our most valuable customer, with the largest volume and highest value. I am committed to supporting our producers, processors, feedlotters and their partners across the entire beef supply chain to capitalise on future opportunities to expand both our beef exports and investment in the industry.

That is why we have invested \$1.3 million in our export ready grants to help Queensland agriculture businesses prepare for and explore international markets. We are already seeing the benefits of that funding. Queensland's agrifood capabilities now align perfectly with growing demand in both markets for our premium fruit, vegetables and value added food and beverages. Queensland broccoli, cauliflower, beetroot, mangoes and macadamia nuts have all proven popular with consumers. I met with a broccoli importer in Japan who could not be more impressed with Queensland's produce, and had a Queensland call to rival Billy Moore's.

Queensland exporters that are already operating in Japan and Korea joined me at various events and were highly positive about the trade mission. One recurring theme in the discussions with consumers and importers in both Japan and Korea was the positive, clean and green reputation the Queensland agricultural industry has. Queensland's response has been quick, open and transparent, and this will have been noticed internationally.

This was my first overseas trade mission as Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries. I was proud to represent the Palaszczuk government and our productive, resilient and innovative agricultural sector.