




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

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ADJOURNMENT

Navua Sedge

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (7.24 pm): Recently I met with representatives from the Malanda Beef Plan Group, the Tablelands Regional Council, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biosecurity Queensland officers for an update on navua sedge control strategies and future research. Last year we secured \$250,000 for research and education on this noxious weed. I thank the member for Mulgrave for his assistance. However, those at the meeting agreed that this weed is not just a danger to the Tablelands' \$149 million agricultural industry. Without the existence of a pre-emergent herbicide and more resources allocated to control this weed, navua sedge should be seriously considered as a biosecurity threat with the potential to devastate the east coast's billion dollar agricultural industry.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries officers have called navua sedge 'the worst pasture weed' they have encountered. Other councils are joining with TRC and escalating the threat level navua sedge poses to their communities. Local government, Biosecurity Queensland, local farmers and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries are all working together to fight this noxious weed on the Atherton Tablelands, but they need more resources to prevent navua sedge causing untold damage to the coastal agricultural industries which have the most diverse and highest yield crop production in the state.

Government funded trials on two Tablelands properties over the next two years are a necessary step to managing navua sedge locally, but more resources are needed to control the spread. We cannot wait until the weed has devastated the industry. We need to act now to make sure navua sedge does not have the opportunity to destroy agriculture in the state in the way panama disease is affecting the banana industry or in the way prickly acacia is affecting the grazing industry.

Currently there is no pre-emergent herbicide available to control navua sedge, and the only herbicide available on the market has a limited effect on the ongoing control of the weed. This is partly because of unsustainable withholding periods which mean cattle are unable to access pastures for 10 weeks after every spray. The herbicide has to be applied twice, 14 weeks apart, so cattle cannot access a paddock for 20 to 24 weeks out of the year. This reduces the carrying capacity of the land to the point that it is almost useless for cattle and dairy producers. More is needed to ensure producers are able to continue using pastures with sustainable ongoing viable productivity. I call on the minister to deliver the review of funding which had been scheduled for November last year and to allocate the resources needed to reduce withholding periods, develop a pre-emergent herbicide and prevent navua sedge becoming a biosecurity disaster.