




Speech By  
**Joseph Kelly**

**MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES**

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**AGRICULTURE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMEMDMNT BILL**

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.52 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to this bill. I do so at the risk of being labelled an inner-city spiv who has nothing to contribute by the member for Burleigh from the renowned agricultural district of Burleigh—a member who demonstrated his credentials in agriculture by inventing the new unit of measure, the ‘hectacre’. I think this bill affirms the minister’s title of ‘Furner, the farmer’s friend’. It is an excellent bill and it should be supported by all those in the House.

Let me move beyond jocularly because this is a serious bill. I rise to make a contribution to this bill because it is an issue that many people in my electorate feel very strongly and passionately about—in many directions, might I say. I do not have to travel far in my electorate to meet people who indirectly generate an income through the agricultural industry. There is great support and a deep understanding by people in my electorate that the agricultural industry is a key part of our state’s economy and something that we have to support. I do not have to go far before I find people who have friends and relatives who are primarily involved in the agricultural industry. There is deep support there.

The part of the bill that I particularly want to focus on is the illegal entry onto farms by protesters. As a member of the Labor Party, I of course support people’s right to protest, but that has to be done in a safe way. I would encourage it to be done in a sensible way and in a way that will achieve an outcome. If you want to change something you have to go to the decision-makers and urge them to make that change. Simply harassing individuals who have no power to change the system is pointless.

I think the tactics being rolled out are ineffective. In fact, if people really wanted to change people’s desire to eat meat they would have to take a whole public health approach to changing people’s habits. I do not see that happening any time soon because many people recognise that meat is an important part of a well-balanced diet, while respecting the fact that many people choose a vegetarian or vegan diet.

When it comes to people illegally entering properties, the first thing I would like to focus on is the threats to biosecurity. I had the great privilege of chairing the agriculture committee for a period of time. We conducted a fairly extensive inquiry into invasive weeds. That took me to many different environments around the state and to many different agricultural business settings. What was common was the commitment of landholders to biosecurity. What was also obvious to me, as someone who is not from a rural background, is that there are a whole lot of things we do not know when we walk into these environments. We can easily do damage.

As a former nurse, I can appreciate that. I too worked in an environment where we had biosecurity issues. We had procedures, practices and equipment in place to deal with that. It is not very hard for someone with no training and limited knowledge to walk into those environments and do great damage. People with a very limited understanding of biosecurity issues coming onto properties pose a great risk to our community. For that reason alone, it is very important that we take the actions outlined in this bill.

During my time as the chair of the agriculture committee the Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation challenged me that I would not know what it is like to get up at four o'clock in the morning. I explained to them that as a nurse I often had not gone to bed by four o'clock in morning. I offered to visit a farm. I was pleased to do that. I will not mention the farming family, particularly given the nature of the bill we are debating. I do not want to breach their confidence and make them a target.

That family was extremely generous and hospitable to myself and my family. They were also extremely nervous when we first got there. They were very keen to make sure that we were respectful when it came to photography on their property because they had had problems. What becomes evident, particularly with this type of farming business, is that yes it is a farm, yes it is an agricultural business, but it is also their home. They live there. It is where their family has lived for several generations. To have strangers bust into their home, for whatever reason, is a real invasion of their privacy. I can see how that would be distressing on so many levels. For that reason we need to make sure that the provisions in this bill are supported. That family would miss out if the debate that occurred earlier around Maleny Dairies had gone another way.

The other thing that is important in this debate is the isolation that exists for many people who work in agricultural industries. My late father-in-law had a property on Kelly Road in Upper Amamoor. It was a reasonably isolated spot. I see that the member for Gympie knows where that is. After his unfortunate passing at a fairly early age I assisted with managing the property on a fairly ad hoc basis for a couple of years until we were able to shift it along.

It is quite amazing when you live in these places. There is one road in and one road out, and it is a dirt road. You have no phone on the farm. You have no access to law enforcement quickly or easily. When a car drives onto your property that you do not know, it is quite a nerve-wracking experience until you are able to identify who it is. If a group of people came onto your property in masks in the middle of the night, I can see that that would be an extremely distressing and scary experience for those people on the receiving end. For that reason, we need to support the provisions in this bill that deal with those situations. With those few words, I commend the bill to the House.