



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**International Year of Fruits and Vegetables**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.43 am): Mr Speaker, 2021 is going to be the year Queensland fruit and vegetable growers really shine. That is because the United Nations has declared 2021 to be the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables. We are the country's largest producer of vegetables. Queensland producers grew \$1.1 billion worth in 2019-20.

**Ms Palaszczuk:** It's our year.

**Mr FURNER:** I take that interjection: it is our year. In the same year, we produced \$1.78 billion worth of fruit and nuts, making Queensland the second largest producer in Australia.

The Palaszczuk government has always backed our farmers to get their fruit and vegetables to homes around the world. Through our Growing Queensland Food Exports Program, we provided matched funding to 15 businesses to find new export markets. Even during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic our innovative farmers worked with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to meet the demand for top quality Queensland fruit and veggies.

Queensland sent its first shipment of homegrown kabocha squash via sea to Japan. Kabocha is a vegetable highly prized in that country and it is grown in the Lockyer Valley. Our mandarin growers have started making inroads to the Philippines for their fruit. Our macadamia growers have increased exports of their product to China.

DAF is the largest provider of horticultural research in Australia. It is working with growers and exporters on a new protected cropping greenhouse, which I have inspected, at Ayr that will be able to one day produce high-value fruit and vegetables for exports to places like Japan, Korea and China. Recently I was fortunate to get my hands on one of their egg plants—a fruit grown in that greenhouse—and try my hand at making baba ganoush at home. Although I will never make it to being a celebrity chef, I think it tasted pretty good.

Together with the member for Nicklin, our great representative of Nicklin, I recently visited the Maroochy Research Facility on the Sunshine Coast where they tested 4,000 mangos over the summer to predict shelf life. Their research is helping the Queensland mango industry to deliver top quality fruit to consumers here and overseas.

Even during the tough times brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Palaszczuk government has stood shoulder to shoulder with our farmers. We declared agriculture an essential industry right from the start. We have worked closely with industry to find workforce solutions while also keeping Queenslanders safe.

We are still the only jurisdiction in the country that is doing on-farm quarantine of workers from the Pacific Labour Scheme and Seasonal Worker Program. Over 700 workers so far have come and helped with the harvest, with more on the way.

Everyone in this chamber knows that Queensland grown fruit and vegetables are the best in the world. We are, of course, investing in both our traditional and our new industries as part of Queensland's economic recovery, and that means we continue to back our world-leading farmers.

In 2021, the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables, the Palaszczuk government wants everyone to get behind our growers, buy Queensland fruit and veggies and share the good news via social media by tagging your photos #eatqld.