




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus Vaccination, Agriculture Industry

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.09 am): Despite the havoc the COVID-19 pandemic has created, there is a bright shining light for Queensland and that is our marvellous agriculture sector. Because the Palaszczuk government classed agriculture as an essential industry at the start of the pandemic, top quality Queensland produce continues to be sent around Australia and also overseas. The industry is doing important work, encouraging the workforce to get vaccinated against COVID-19 because they are going to need their workers fit and firing with the workload to come.

The latest AgTrends data shows the total value of Queensland's primary industries commodities is forecast at \$20.66 billion in 2021-22. That is eight per cent higher than the final 2020-21 estimate, and that is despite the massive economic and social disruptions of COVID-19.

There were more than 365,000 people working across the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors in 2020-21. That is up four per cent on the previous year and a testament to the wonderful work our producers have done to keep growing top quality food and fibre, and all with the unwavering support of the Palaszczuk Labor government. The latest AgTrends data—

An opposition member: Oh, you are kidding!

Mr FURNER: No, I am not kidding at all; I am serious. The latest AgTrends data shows the value of our high-quality wheat and barley crops is set to double. Cotton and chickpea crops are forecast to increase by 30 per cent and our sorghum crop is set to see a 15 per cent increase. But we cannot continue to grow Queensland agriculture if we cannot keep Queenslanders safe.

Now is the time to get vaccinated against COVID-19. I want to commend and thank a number of producers who have set strong examples by vaccinating themselves and their staff, like Australian Country Choice and also JBS on the Darling Downs. Wherever you are in Queensland, now is the time to vaccinate to keep Queenslanders safe and our food supply chain going.