

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 1353
Asked on Wednesday, 1 November 2006

MR HINCHLIFFE asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

QUESTION:

With reference to concerns raised in recent public debates that agriculture accounts for 73 per cent of all water consumption in Queensland—

How is the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries supporting the efficient use of water in the sector?

ANSWER:

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) supports the economic development of Queensland's primary industries on a sustainable basis. The efficient management and use of water is a key natural resource management issue that requires coordinated planning and action across state and local government.

DPI&F continues to contribute to the efficient use of water through research, development and extension projects that include:

- The recently announced Property Management Systems Initiative to improve water use efficiency in irrigated agriculture. Property Management Systems aim to increase the profitability and sustainability of primary production by implementing actions that improve efficient resource use including fertilisers, soils and water.
- The development of plant varieties with enhanced water utilisation capable of maintaining or improving yields in the emerging drier and warmer environments such as drought tolerant varieties of sorghum and wheat and the breeding of cereal crop varieties with more efficient root systems.
- Research into the sustainable use of recycled water in agriculture.
- Collaborating with the Department of Natural Resources and Water to foster the adoption of best practice in irrigation systems through the implementation of the Rural Water Use Efficiency (RWUE) Initiative. For example, within the cotton industry this initiative has contributed to significant savings of water and has increased the amount of cotton produced per volume of water. Under the Cotton Australia Best Management Practice (BMP) program, an outcome component of RWUE, 78% of cotton growers are now adopting BMP for irrigation.