

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 545
Asked on Tuesday, 17 April 2007

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

QUESTION:

Will he advise how the CD-based software package 'Rainman' can assist primary producers in developing profitable and sustainable enterprise management systems?

ANSWER:

Rainman is one of several tools that can assist farmers in developing and incorporating climate risk management strategies in their business planning and enterprise management systems.

The Rainman StreamFlow version 4 CD ('Rainfall information for better Management') holds long-term monthly and daily rainfall data for some 3 800 stations in Australia (plus some 9 000 international stations). It was designed to answer typical questions from producers, and to present these results as tables, graphs and maps.

For seasonal rainfall analyses, Rainman can look at the historical effect of an El Niño or La Niña on rainfall in a future season and tells the user whether such an influence is significant or should be ignored as being just due to chance. Rainman offers a range of probability distributions for local rainfall.

Easy-to-use analyses include monthly historical rainfall, seasonal forecasts for user-defined seasons, seasonal or yearly trends over time and rankings of past and present droughts according to their severity and duration. Rainman can also analyse the effects of climate variability on streamflow based on some 400 river gauges in Australia and also includes a climate educational package.

Future climate and rainfall information for updating Rainman will be provided by the Climate Change Centre of Excellence (CCCE) under the Department of Natural Resources and Water (NRW). The CCCE has been formed to focus the government's efforts in addressing current and future climate change impacts. As a consequence of the formation of the CCCE climate related science and policy capability has been transferred from the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries to NRW under the Machinery of Government changes initiated after the last election.