

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 683
Asked on Tuesday, 22 May 2007

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

QUESTION:

How did the recent Investing in the Future Expo at Hermitage Research Station, Warwick, benefit Queensland's grain industry?

ANSWER:

'Accelerating economic growth through the grains industry' was the theme that attracted stakeholders to the 'Investing in the Future' Expo at Hermitage Research Station (HRS) on 4 May 2007.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) Research Station, via Warwick, opened its doors to the public to showcase the innovations and achievements of the world class Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) delivered to the Queensland and Australian grain industry, through active programs in both summer and winter crops.

HRS is situated 7 km east of Warwick and is the oldest agricultural research station in Queensland, commencing operations in March 1897. 'Hermitage State Farm', was established to provide information for settlers on these new sub-divisions.

I launched the Hermitage Expo which was chaired by DPI&F Ambassador Councillor Tom Woods, Mayor of the Waggamba Shire Council.

At the Expo, stakeholders saw first hand how collaborative partnerships and innovative, first-class science, research and development can reap great rewards for Queensland agriculture. Visitors to the Expo had the opportunity to witness first-hand the innovations and achievements of the Queensland grains industry and see agricultural science research in action.

This was a major Primary Industries Week event. The Expo profiled economic growth; the valuable work of DPI&F scientists and researchers in sustaining Queensland agriculture and the economy; investment opportunities in the grains industry; and demonstrated exciting and worthwhile career paths in primary industries for young people.

A plenary session opened the day with leaders in the Australian grain industry speaking on the future direction of the world and national grains industry and the future opportunities for Australian grain farmers in national and global grains markets.

Speakers included:

- Selwyn Snell – Chief Executive Officer, Single Vision Grains Australia who discussed the changing international grains industry and the opportunities this will present for Australian farmers and value adding industries.

- Mr Phil Holmes and Dr Graeme Hammer - discussed the opportunities for accelerating growth in the Australian feed grains industries
- Dr Slade Lee and Mr Gavin Gibson - discussed opportunities for accelerating growth in the Australian food grains industries
- Dr Andy Borrell - reviewed the research priorities for a world of increasing water scarcity in many traditional grain production regions
- Mr David Hamilton - reviewed the world class smart science research which DPI&F is conducting to address the challenges identified by earlier speakers.

The lunch session focused on examples where regional entrepreneurial primary producers have successfully exploited value adding opportunities for their produce. These included: Tatong Meats, Hi-Value Fruit and Berry Gardens, Ballandean Estate Wines and Bellata Gold pasta. Mr Doug Cush from Bellata Gold addressed the lunch time forum.

During the day Smart Science tours were conducted highlighting the world class DPI&F research conducted at Hermitage.

This research included:

- Sorghum breeding and physiology including 'stay –green'
- Barley breeding, pathology and agronomy
- Mungbean, soybean and chickpea breeding
- Biotechnology
- Grain storage and food protection.

The Expo also demonstrated exciting and worthwhile career paths in primary industries and science for young people. Invited school groups, from primary and secondary school, were given guided tours of Hermitage and engaged in interactive demonstrations and scientific experiments. In association with AgForce an interactive display on Rural Labour and Skilling was also conducted on the day.

Many supporting agribusiness industries had displays as well as supporting organisations such as the Bureau of Meteorology.

With an outstanding contribution from the whole DPI&F team at HRS and excellent media coverage reaching the whole grains industry, I can only say that the Hermitage Expo was a great success. DPI&F makes a very substantial contribution to the prosperity of the grains industry, and despite drought conditions, the grains industry knows DPI&F is still making a great contribution to the industry.