

**Question on Notice
No. 898
Asked on 7 June 2007**

MS JARRATT asked the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (MS SPENCE)—

QUESTION:

Will she advise how officers of the Queensland Police Service are contributing to the security of the agricultural industry in the Bowen area?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Police Service recognises the economic importance of the agricultural industry in the Bowen area and has implemented a number of initiatives aimed at protecting that industry from crime.

The Police Service is working collaboratively with other agencies including the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and Queensland Health to address safety and security issues affecting communities in the Bowen area.

On 15 February 2007 the Police Service conducted an agricultural security forum in Bowen. This forum was attended by approximately 65 people from the rural sector as well as business owners and employees associated with small-crop production in the area. The Honourable Tim Mulherin MP, Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries, spoke at the forum and expressed support for the work being done by police and local officers of his Department in creating a safer agricultural industry.

The main focus of the forum was to advise the rural community of the need to implement security measures and to use appropriate evidentiary gathering procedures in the event of any incident of malicious damage to crops. The owners of a number of farms in the Bowen area have implemented crime prevention measures as a result of the advice provided at the forum.

The Northern Police Region is developing a 'suspicious activity' sheet which will be provided to farms in the Bowen area. This sheet will enable farmers to provide clear and concise information on any suspicious activity they may observe on their farms. This information can be sent by email or facsimile to Bowen Police Station or Crimestoppers for investigation or intelligence gathering purposes. It is expected this 'suspicious activity' sheet will be made available on a State-wide basis in due course.

Another initiative currently being developed by the Police Service in conjunction with the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries involves the production of information brochures which will be made available to farmers throughout the State. These brochures will be entitled "Protect your crops from criminal activity" and "What to do when you suspect your crops have been sabotaged". A media statement will be made in the near future to launch these brochures.

The Police Service will continue to work with other agencies and rural communities to provide a safer and more secure environment for Queensland's agricultural industries.