

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 1615
Asked on Thursday, 30 October 2008

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

QUESTION:

What are the significant achievements in 2007-08 for the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Animal Welfare Program and what is the outlook for 2008-09?

ANSWER:

The Animal Welfare program promotes high standards and best practice in animal welfare and ethics. A positive welfare and ethics reputation is a component of ensuring market access for Queensland's livestock industries and biotechnology sector.

The program had a number of significant achievements in 2007-08.

Livestock producers and national and international communities will be more confident that livestock transportation practices in Australia protect and enhance animal welfare when the new Australian Standards for the Land Transport of Livestock are adopted under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2000*. The standards have been developed with considerable input from Biosecurity Queensland.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) received over 5 200 submissions from public consultation on a discussion paper on the management of unwanted cats and dogs. This feedback informed our development of management options for government consideration. Government has since announced new policy directions in this area. From an animal welfare perspective, these measures include:

- a joint community education campaign, in consultation with the RSPCA, the Animal Welfare League and the Queensland Companion Animal Management Group, which aims to make people aware of their responsibilities with regard to responsible pet ownership and the desexing of pets.
- the development of a voluntary code of practice for pet shops to set standards for the care and management of animals in pet shops.
- supporting four councils (Townsville City Council, Logan City Council, Gold Coast City Council and Moreton Bay Regional Council) to conduct two-year pilot studies trialing innovative strategies to reduce the number of unwanted cats and dogs. These studies plan to include increased education about responsible pet ownership, desexing incentives and subsidies, household surveys and enhanced auditing.

The Animal Welfare Program has promoted good standards for the care of animals through targeted education programs to schools and the wider Queensland community.

The Animal Welfare Dog Team is undertaking primary school visits across Queensland promoting the Help An Animal Smile key animal welfare messages and website resource activities. There has been overwhelming positive support from the schools for these activities.

A brochure entitled "Dogs in Utes" has been released and reported widely in the press, promoting good restraint practices for dogs travelling on the back of vehicles.

A series of printed books largely aimed at indigenous primary school children to promote good animal welfare practices has been finalised. There has been a high demand for these books from indigenous schools.

DPI&F is a partner in an initiative with Queensland Health working closely with indigenous Councils to promote and encourage better welfare, health and management of all animals in indigenous communities.

The program also participated in the QUT Smart Train initiative with animal welfare displays at most venues on the Smart Train itinerary.

In 2008-09 the Animal Welfare program will continue to contribute significantly to the government's priorities. The Animal Welfare and ethics program ensures the use of animals in Queensland meets community and market expectations and cultural values. This includes promotion of the Pet Shop Code, developing standards and guidelines for the care of dogs and cats and for rodeos.

The program will continue to work with industry to promote welfare standards for the transport of livestock.

In addition to this, the Animal Welfare program, with the support of the zoo industry, is in the process of developing legislation and standards for exhibited animals. This will assure the community that zoo animals are being cared for appropriately.