

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 642
Asked on 13 April 2010

MR HOPPER asked the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland (MR MULHERIN)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how many grains research staff are currently specifically allocated to research in the grains industry and of these, how many are involved in barley research?

ANSWER:

The grains industry is a key driver for economic prosperity and employment in Queensland. It underpins our vital food, intensive livestock and export industries while supporting rural towns, regional businesses and vibrant communities.

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), recognises that grains research remains a major priority for continued profitability and growth in this sector in the face of a rapidly changing market and production environment.

Our research effort is based around key projects distributed across the State and conducted in partnership with growers, industry and external funding bodies such as the Grain Research and Development Corporation (GRDC). Projects are being delivered in genetic improvement, crop protection and farming systems research.

The number of specific projects in grain research, and therefore the number of staff allocated to these projects within DEEDI, varies over time and in line with current priorities for the sector. Currently, a total of 125.5 full time equivalent staff are engaged in research projects directly relevant to the grains industry. Of these staff, 20.5 full time equivalent staff are allocated specifically to barley research within DEEDI.

Expenditure on grains research and development in Queensland per tonne of grain produced is more than double that of any other State. We recognise the greater diversity of crops and environmental challenges faced in Queensland, and as such continue to provide significant support for grains research and development for the benefit of our industry.

While skilled staff are vital for effective grains research, we also require supporting infrastructure that better aligns with changing scientific needs and to better develop opportunities for partnerships. Therefore, I continue to work with AgForce Grains to progress our 'Fresh Approach' to modernise the research infrastructure associated with grains research.

In this way, we can deliver the innovative, world-class research that makes real differences to the cropping industries that support Queensland's vibrant economy both now and in the future.