

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**No. 556**  
**Asked on 20 August 2013**

**MR HOBBS** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MR McVEIGH)–

**QUESTION:**

Will the Minister advise of issues affecting the beef industry in Queensland, and what action is being taken by the Queensland Government to assist beef producers?

**ANSWER:**

The ongoing dry conditions and the run of good seasons in previous years precipitated a large increase in cattle presented at abattoirs this year. In 2012-13, Queensland meat processors slaughtered 3.81 million head of cattle, producing 1.103 million tonnes of beef. Queensland exports 62 per cent of Australia's beef exports worth \$3.156 billion.

Boxed beef exports to China increased to \$258.2 million in 2012-13, up from \$37.7 million in 2011-12. Export beef sales also increased to the United States up 7 per cent, Korea up 11 per cent and Taiwan up 4 per cent and declined in Japan by 4 per cent.

The beef supply chain extends across the north of Australia encompassing Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia. To support the northern beef industry, I established and chair the Committee of Northern Australian Agricultural Ministers. The committee has developed an integrated supply chain Action Plan which sets the direction for Governments across the north together with the Federal Government and Meat and Livestock Australia to support the northern beef industry.

In June 2013 I announced the Queensland Agriculture Strategy a 2040 vision to double Queensland's agricultural production. Underpinning the Strategy is a commitment across the government of \$400 million to deliver the 60 initiatives outlined. This will mean different things to different industries, and for the beef sector, the growth driver will be from growth in exports.

Queensland industry stakeholders attended a beef roundtable in July 2013. From this a Queensland Beef Strategy to augment the Agriculture Strategy was initiated. The Strategy will set achievable short and long term actions and provide a framework to shape beef policy direction.

**Research Development and Extension**

In 2013-14, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will invest \$5.6 million in beef research development and extension (RD&E) to underpin industry productivity growth. Key areas for improvement are:

- animal reproduction, growth and market suitability;
- feed-base through high forage production and grazing land management;
- use of remote technologies; and

- systems integration focusing on people, enterprises and business resilience through increased adoption of best management practices.

To support our role as the National leader in beef RD&E, we continue to invest in the development of world class research infrastructure committing \$2 million to transform the Spyglass Research Station from a commercial cattle property into a research-ready facility.

### Market Access

In May 2013 I undertook a short mission to Jakarta in the company of my Northern Territory counterpart, the Honourable Willem Westra Van Holthe MP, the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries, to help rebuild relationships between Indonesia and the northern Australian beef industry. We discussed the opportunities for trade and co-investment with the Minister for Agriculture, the Minister for State-Owned Enterprises and the Vice Minister for Trade.

With respect to other emerging Asian markets I will be taking a delegation of industry leaders on a trade and investment attraction mission to Thailand (Bangkok), China (Beijing) and Hong Kong in September 2013. The mission will focus on sugar, horticulture and beef and livestock.

### Drought relief

The Government provides support to producers in drought declared areas or on declared properties through three programs: the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS); Farm Finance Package; and the opening of five national parks to drought affected cattle.

DRAS provides up to \$20,000 per year to assist with freight, fodder and water while the drought is declared and freight subsidies for restocking and return from agistment after the drought declaration is revoked. Farm Finance, funded by a \$60 million Federal Government grant, will provide loans to commercially viable farms that are currently unable to meet commitments due to drought conditions. Five national parks and one national park (recovery), in addition to several National Reserve System (NRS) properties, have been opened for drought affected cattle to graze.

### Bovine Johne's disease

The Newman Government will continue to help the cattle industry through the current bovine Johne's disease (BJD) outbreak. The State Government has provided \$2 million in seed funding and a \$3 million loan to be matched dollar-for-dollar by cattle producers through a voluntary industry levy. Following feedback from industry and those affected, the Government has brought forward the \$5 million available as immediate support.