

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 497

Asked on 5 June 2014

MR KATTER asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MR McVEIGH)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the 2013-14 State Budget which saw \$20m offered to farmers via the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme and yesterday's budget which allocated \$18.8m to this same scheme—

How much of this initial assistance will have been rolled out to Queensland producers by 30 June and has there been any investigation into the cost of not adequately saving large portions of the cattle industry that are under serious financial threat?

ANSWER:

As you would appreciate, the 2014-15 Budget is prepared well before the final expenditure figure for 2013-14 can be known.

With that in mind, by 2 June 2014 the \$20m allocation in 2013-14 for the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) was exceeded. With claims processing continuing for the remainder of June, the 2013-14 expenditure on DRAS will therefore be greater than forecast in the 2014-15 Budget.

It is hoped that the next wet season brings an end to the drought, and not all of the funds allocated to DRAS in 2014-15 will be needed. However, the Queensland Government has committed to continuing to assist primary producers while the drought lasts.

There has been a recent investigation of the financial circumstances of the beef industry. It is the 2013 Northern Beef Situation Analysis, produced by Meat and Livestock Australia. It is recommended reading for anyone concerned with the current financial state of northern cattle producers.