

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 351

Asked on 22 March 2018

MS J PEASE asked the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise on the impacts of Commonwealth Government's decisions on Queensland biosecurity and how they may apply to the electorate of Lytton?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), is working collaboratively with other State and Territory governments, the Federal Government, peak agricultural industry groups and environmental organisations to enhance the national biosecurity system and to strengthen national approaches to biosecurity risk preparedness. Information is a critical element needed for an effective national biosecurity system. Queensland is leading a national discussion aimed at improving the sharing of cross-jurisdictional biosecurity related information.

Queensland is also involved in the development of a new Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB). This agreement underpins national responses to emergency pests and diseases and provides a framework for collaborative surveillance and response activities between State and Federal Governments, as well as data and information sharing protocols. Queensland is working actively to progress a formal national agreement for sharing costs of future exotic aquatic diseases.

The newly released Queensland Biosecurity Strategy provides further evidence that we want to remain at the forefront of delivering effective biosecurity outcomes with our partners. The Queensland Biosecurity Strategy has been developed collaboratively with industry and the community to deliver shared ownership and management of biosecurity risks and decision making, to protect the State's almost \$20 billion agriculture industry, our lifestyle and our environment.

The recent emergency response exercise "Exercise Border Bridge" demonstrated the Queensland Government's commitment to improving Queensland and Australia's preparedness capability. This cross border scenario-based exercise focused on interstate communication and collaboration across the Queensland-New South Wales border. Exercise Border Bridge involved staff from DAF, the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, the Federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources as well as representatives from other jurisdictions and plant and livestock industries. Findings from the exercise will help strengthen our national biosecurity framework.

Queensland's commitment to enhance and contribute to an effective national biosecurity system will help reduce impacts to local industries.

The flow on effects from the outbreak of white spot disease in commercial prawn farms on the Logan River in south east Queensland are continuing to impact broadly on a range of Queensland businesses.

The Queensland Government has mounted an ongoing campaign and response against white spot disease. Due to uncertainty about the origin of the virus that causes white spot, the Federal Government imposed a temporary ban on the import of raw prawns which lapsed in July 2017.

The Federal Government then implemented conditions for the importation of raw prawns that require product testing both in the country of origin and in Australia. These conditions will remain in place while the Federal Government undertakes a review of the biosecurity risks and import conditions for prawns and prawn products for human consumption. Submissions for the review close in June 2018.

The prawn and worm bait industry is directly impacted by the movement controls in place because of white spot. Worms are traditionally sent as a live product to New South Wales. This is no longer permitted. Further, approximately 80 per cent of Australia's bait prawns are sourced from Moreton Bay. Unless cooked or treated by gamma irradiation this green product is not permitted to be moved from the restricted area. The prohibition on these movements is to prevent the spread of this disease to other areas or other jurisdictions.

The Queensland Government is aware of the impacts on the various fishing and aquaculture sectors. The Government is continuing to work with those affected fishing sectors and explore options to reduce the impacts of these movement restrictions. Some bait products such as worms and yabbies are being cooked and some bait prawns gamma irradiated. Whilst these processes are freeing up some of the restrictions, it is expected impacts will be felt for some time into the future.