

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 1661**

**Asked on 17 October 2019**

**MR J KELLY ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (HON M FURNER)—**

### **QUESTION:**

Will the Minister provide advice on any programs or initiatives to increase agricultural and research opportunities for Queensland firms in Latin America?

### **ANSWER:**

I thank the Member for the question.

Queensland is fortunate to share many similarities with a range of Latin American countries – we both have a diverse climate; produce a range of high quality food products; and have a diversity of natural resources that are either used by a variety of industries or exported for further manufacture.

It is these similarities which make many Latin American countries a natural partner for collaboration with Queensland across a variety of sectors, including our food and agribusiness industries.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) has begun exploring these opportunities, and has entered into collaborative activities with a number of organisations from several Latin American countries to further develop our respective agricultural industries.

Dr Marcelo Benvenuti, a research scientist within DAF's dairy research team, recently visited Chile following an invitation from Cooprinsem, a large cooperative of dairy farmers located in the south of Chile. Dr Benvenuti presented on the dairy teams recent findings on how improved grazing management improves milk yield and profitability. Cooprinsem reciprocated revealing their developments in pasture monitoring using satellite remote sensing and radar sensors. Remote sensing is an area of potential future collaboration between DAF and Cooprinsem.

Panama disease tropical race 4 (Panama TR4) – a devastating disease of bananas - has been recently detected in Colombia, one of the world's biggest exporters of bananas. In September 2019, Biosecurity Queensland's Panama TR4 Program leader, Ms Rhiannon Evans, was invited to visit Colombia to share Queensland's success in managing the disease. Ms Evans shared with the Colombian government and industry representatives some of Queensland's control and containment measures which have been successful in containing the disease to three farms over the past four years. The visit was an excellent knowledge sharing exercise and has emphasised the importance of working together on a global scale to prevent the spread of this disease.

Staff within DAF also develop numerous informal networks to tap into the broader knowledge base of the global scientific community. One such instance is where horticulture researchers have established links with avocado scientists from other avocado producing countries around the world to help better understand the plant and how to maximise production for our

producers. This network was recently renewed and expanded during the recent World Avocado Congress in Colombia. The network includes scientists from the Latin American countries of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru and Mexico. Whilst DAF has no programs or initiatives to increase agricultural and research opportunities for Queensland in these countries, the department interacts with these scientists from time to time on technical matters and has previously arranged tours of cutting edge avocado orchards for growers and industry representatives from Queensland and Latin American countries.