

Question on Notice

No. 288

Asked on 28 February 2019

MR C WHITING ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise on the success of the Queensland Government's Strawberry Breeding program, and outline what support this will provide to the Queensland strawberry industry?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The farm gate value of the Queensland strawberry industry is forecast to be \$148 million in 2018-19. This is approximately 8 per cent lower than the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' final estimate for 2017-18 and 14 per cent lower than the average for the past five years. These reductions are primarily due to the strawberry needle contamination issues in September 2018, which had an immediate and significant impact on consumption and prices.

Queensland is now the major strawberry-producing State in Australia, accounting for approximately 42 per cent of the national industry. South-East Queensland has historically supplied most of the winter strawberry production for Australia and, more recently, some summer production has also been supplied from the Stanthorpe region.

Historically, the majority of varieties grown by the Australian strawberry industry were bred overseas, where growing environments and consumer preferences differ from those in Australia. The aim of the Queensland Government's Strawberry Breeding Program is to provide locally adapted varieties with superior production and consumer qualities that meet Australia's changing market and environmental demands. In 2018, the program's varieties captured an estimated 73 per cent of the subtropical industry and 30 per cent of the national industry.

The program is co-funded by Hort Innovation via industry levy-funds and the Queensland Government through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.