

Question on Notice

No. 646

Asked on 25 May 2021

MS C LUI ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise on the role that broad acre farming systems has in the future of agricultural development in Queensland?

ANSWER:

Agriculture within Queensland contributes significantly to the state's economic viability and drives the prosperity of many regional and rural communities. Broadacre cropping contributes \$2.877 billion in gross value of production, which represents 15.6 per cent of Queensland's total gross value of production. To progress broadacre farming systems in Queensland will require the sector to develop and adopt innovation and technology.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA) commissioned a situational analysis into broadacre cropping, which was released in July 2020. The report outlines the opportunity for a mosaic agricultural footprint in the north, which would complement the beef industry and diversify landholders' risk. Production of cotton, sorghum, maize, mungbeans, peanuts and sesame are all potentially viable for the area. DAF is working in collaboration with the CRCNA to undertake research near Georgetown, which assesses the viability of irrigated cotton, soybeans, mungbeans and sesame. This research also provides extension and development support to local producers.

The Gulf River region of North Queensland is also seeing an influx from southern agricultural businesses seeking to develop new broadacre farming. An injection of experience, technical skills and best management practices from these established broadacre farming businesses will enhance the local communities. DAF is working collaboratively with industry to support these new producers through research that delivers a new farming system which adapts and mitigates for an increasingly variable climate.

As global populations grow, the demand for protein will increase. Queensland is well-positioned to meet this requirement through the development of new commodities and value-adding to produce from existing and emerging agricultural developments.

An increased production of pulses in Queensland will provide domestic and global consumers with an additional protein source which is plant-based. Plant-based proteins, in combination with our well-established red meat industry, will ensure we accommodate and capitalise on emerging markets. Queensland is known for the environmentally responsible production of fibre and food that is safe and highly nutritional. Therefore, fostering the future agricultural development and advancement of our broadacre farming systems will benefit the economy, rural and regional communities, and the population of Queensland.