Question on Notice

No. 870

Asked on 17 June 2021

MR A TANTARI ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline how the government is investing in research to tackle bacterial disease in Mung Beans?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), supports regional jobs and economic development by breeding high-yielding and disease-resistant mungbean varieties that have helped quadruple mungbean production and exports.

Mungbean is a short season, tropical pulse crop prized for its high-value grain. It is worth over $1 000 per tonne to growers and $100 million in gross value of production (GVP) to Queensland. However, the bacterial diseases halo blight and tan spot are major risks to crop production and profitability. DAF's National Mungbean Improvement Program is developing and deploying genetic resistances to these diseases to address the lack of 'in-crop' control options.

For example, the latest mungbean variety released in 2020, Opal-AU, combined high-yield potential with the best available protection to halo blight. In eight years of regional trials, Opal-AU demonstrated a 20 per cent yield gain over the next best mungbean variety in southern Queensland. During the cooler and wetter seasons in spring/summer of 2020/21, Opal-AU's resistance to halo blight proved a valuable tool for growers in protecting crops from disease. Opal-AU is also providing growers with the most effective protection from the fungal disease, powdery mildew.

DAF's National Mungbean Improvement Program continues to innovate by incorporating new sources of disease resistance from wild Australian crop relatives of mungbean and the related species 'black gram'. An accelerated glasshouse program at DAF's Hermitage Research Facility is also set to reduce the time taken to develop, test and get new mungbean varieties into the hands of Queensland farmers. The expedited process will see the varieties available two years earlier than usual. Advanced breeding technologies for disease resistance, including genomic selection, are also being deployed using a unique genetic resource for mungbean. The 'world first' resource was developed as part of a Queensland Government-funded project conducted by DAF and led by the Queensland University of Technology.

DAF's National Mungbean Improvement Program is also supported by Australian grain growers through the Grains Research and Development Corporation. A recent economic analysis found the Program delivered $12 of benefit for every $1 invested by partners. It remains at the cutting edge of crop improvement efforts for this important pulse crop. The program provides vital genetic tools on which growers depend, to combat costly bacterial disease, lift production and drive increased profitability for them and for Queensland.