

Question on Notice

No. 936

Asked on 31 August 2022

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

QUESTION:

With reference to farmers in the state doing it tough with substantial cost increases in the cost of fertilizer for crops and poisons to combat feral pests and noxious weeds— Will the Minister outline any subsidy programs or assistance the State Government is offering or planning to offer to farmers to assist them in managing these massive rising costs?

ANSWER:

The total value of Queensland's primary industry commodities in 2021-22 was \$23.54 billion. This is made up of \$18.41 billion gross value of production at the farm gate, plus a further \$5.13 billion in value-added production.

This total is 20 per cent more than for 2020–21 and 24 per cent greater than the average for the past 5 years.

Direct subsidies or price support to farmers is not consistent with our national World Trade Organisation commitments.

Fertilizer Australia, a peak body for Australian fertilizer industry, has indicated that world stock is available. Decisions to import fertilizer will need to be made much earlier in the planting season which means producers will need to commit to prices earlier. The fertilizer industry will seek orders to be placed and paid for in advance of ordering international import shipments.

The Queensland Government is a supporter of FertCare, a national training, quality assurance, certification and accreditation program delivered by independent third parties on behalf of the Australian fertiliser industry. These programs are designed to assist farmers minimise the overuse of fertilizer and importantly ensure the right quantities and type of fertilizers are used.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, together with industry organisations, has continued research and development in the cropping area that has minimised fertilizer run off to improve water quality flowing to the Great Barrier Reef that reduces costs to the farmer.

With regard to feral pests and invasive weeds, the Queensland Government provides funds directly to local councils and landcare groups who administer baiting schemes for feral animals, as well as local weed management and control.

On 28 October 2021, I announced that Local Governments and landcare groups across Queensland would receive grants totalling almost \$1 million to support projects that reduce the impact of invasive plants and animals.

On 24 March 2022, I invited Far North Queensland local councils to apply for grants to work together on invasive pest control planning and to improve biosecurity capacity in the region.

More than \$400,000 was made available for regional collaboration under the Better Partnerships Project.

We have now committed more than \$1.3 million under the scheme to support the capacity and capability of Local Government to manage invasive plants and animals collaboratively across Queensland.

One of the Palaszczuk Government's most successful commitments has been to cluster fencing. Since 2015, over \$26 million has been provided to support the construction of cluster fencing and the control of invasive plants and animals. This funding has been complemented by a \$14 million investment from the Federal Government.

Now more than 9,000 kilometres of fencing has been approved and 400 sheep-producing properties have been protected thanks to funding support provided by the Palaszczuk Government.