

Question on Notice

No. 1586

Asked on Wednesday, 29 November 2023

MRS J GILBERT asked the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister indicate why breaking into the Japanese market would be beneficial for Queensland horticultural producers?

ANSWER:

Japan is Queensland's third largest agricultural export market and, although it is a mature market, there are many opportunities for our premium horticultural produce.

Queensland-grown Eco Bananas were shipped to Japan for the first time during my trade and investment mission in November.

Eco Bananas are grown with minimal intervention and without the use of chemicals, so they appeal to Japanese consumer demand for healthy and more environmentally friendly produce.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) is working on a four-year project with the Fight Food Waste Co-operative Research Centre, to analyse the impact of shipping and supply chain conditions, such as storage temperature and ripening conditions on bananas. This work ensures that the fruit arriving in Japan and other markets is of premium quality.

Japanese importers have been looking for alternative banana varieties following outbreaks of Panama disease in south-east Asia, so the entry of Eco Bananas in the market has been timely.

Bananas are an important crop in Queensland worth about \$600 million per year. This project, combined with the work that DAF researchers are undertaking to breed bananas that are resistant to Panama disease, will help ensure quality Queensland produce is available to key trade partners such as Japan.

Queensland-grown bananas, melons, mangoes and vegetables are in demand in Japan. Focusing on exporting these key horticultural commodities to the Japanese market will result in industry development, economic growth and jobs in regional Queensland.