

Question on Notice

No. 644

Asked on 23 May 2023

MS J HOWARD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise what is the outlook for agricultural crops in the South Region?

ANSWER:

The outlook for agricultural crops in the South Region of Queensland is generally positive, especially for the coming winter season. The south region has a long history of agricultural production and is well-suited to a variety of crops. The south region has a diverse geography and climatic conditions, ranging from sub-tropical Bundaberg in the north, to temperate Granite Belt in the south to arid in the west.

In recent times, there has been a growing demand for agricultural products from the south region due to the increasing global and Australian population, strong commodity prices, and consumer preferences for healthy eating. Therefore, this offers many opportunities for producers in Southern Queensland to produce and market crops that provide a return on investment.

Some of the major agricultural crops grown in the south region include wheat, chickpeas, oats, barley, sorghum, cotton, mungbeans, maize, sugarcane, macadamias, fruit (particularly strawberries, citrus, avocados and mandarins) and vegetables (tomatoes, capsicums, leafy vegetables, carrots, sweet corn and cucumbers).

In addition to the major crops listed above, there are also a number of niche crops that are grown in the south region, such as Duboisia, ginger and herbs. Niche crops are grown for local consumption or for export. They provide farmers with an opportunity to diversify their operations and generate additional income.

These crops are grown for a variety of purposes, including food, animal feed, and industrial use. The demand for these crops is expected to continue to grow in the coming years, which will provide farmers with a strong market for their products.

Grain prices in the south region are currently above five-year averages.

The citrus crops in the North Burnett are flourishing this year with export markets looking very favourable for a profitable season.

Following some drier than average years, seasonal conditions improved during the last 1-2 years for most of the south region. However, below average, and well below average rainfall patterns have become evident since January across the southern region. From June to August, below-median rainfall is likely for almost all the south region.

Sunwater dams, that provide irrigation for agriculture crops, have a combined storage level of greater than 90 per cent as of May 2023 in the south region.

Supply chain disruptions, such as sea freight delays, container availability and agricultural input supplies caused by COVID-19 and other global impacts have returned to near pre-covid levels.

Overall, the outlook for agricultural crops in the south region is positive. There is a growing demand for agricultural products from our south region, and the niche crops grown for local consumption or export. As a result, many opportunities exist for farmers in Southern Queensland to produce and market their crops.