



The Hon Mark Furner MP
Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries

Our ref: CTS 31965/19

1 William Street Brisbane 4000
GPO Box 46 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7420
Email agriculture@ministerial.qld.gov.au

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Services
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Neil,

Thank you for your letter of 29 November 2019 enclosing the petition from the Animal Justice Party, regarding the untapped potential of increasing plant based industries in Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Government is very supportive of the expansion of agriculture in Queensland.

Approximately 85 per cent of Queensland is used for agriculture, with the vast majority used to graze cattle. Arable land is significantly less abundant, with only 2.5 per cent of Queensland suitable for cropping and horticulture. Despite this limitation, the horticultural and cropping sectors are highly efficient and productive.

Queensland is one of the largest producers of fruit and vegetables in Australia. Its major vegetable crops include tomatoes, capsicums, beans, mushrooms, sweet potatoes and lettuce. Queensland grows over 95 per cent of Australia's bananas and is the nation's biggest producer of tropical fruits such as mangoes, pineapples and avocados. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) also undertakes significant research and development activities to improve cropping and horticultural production in Queensland.

The Queensland AgTrends 2019–2020 report states that the total Gross Value of Production for fruit and nuts in Queensland for 2019–20 is forecast to be \$1.93 billion. This is one per cent higher than DAF's final estimate for 2018–19 and 11 per cent greater than the average for the past five years. This demonstrates the strong growth in this sector.

There is increasing interest in vertical farming style systems that can be located in urban areas. These systems best produce leafy greens, herbs or plant seedlings. The challenge all these new businesses face is to be commercially viable against the low costs of traditional open-field farming. However, vertical farming uses less water and can grow plants faster. Protected Cropping covers all systems under some form of protection such as cover, shade cloth, or greenhouses. DAF undertakes research and development to help support the protected cropping industry and also provides advice to Local Governments on how to incorporate these activities into their respective planning frameworks.

If you require further information, I encourage you to contact my office on 07 3719 7420.

Yours sincerely



MARK FURNER MP

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