

SHEEP INDUSTRY

**1072. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

I refer to the meat processing capacity constraints and market conditions that currently prevail within the Western Australian sheep industry.

- (1) Does the minister accept that the federal government's decision to ban live sheep exports is a contributing factor to the current market conditions?
- (2) What is the potential number of sheep currently being held within the Western Australian agricultural system that may need to be euthanased as a consequence of the current market conditions?
- (3) What plans does the state government have in place to assist farmers in the event that the mass euthanasing of sheep is necessary?
- (4) Which industry organisations were consulted as part of the development of those plans, and when were they finalised?

**Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) There are a number of factors that have contributed to low national sheep prices, including farms in other states destocking as a result of climate change and reduced domestic demand for breeding ewes.
- (2) There are reports of sheep farmers considering euthanasing livestock, particularly older breeding ewes, as dropping livestock prices result in older animals being deemed to have no commercial value. The potential number of sheep being considered for euthanasia will be impacted by a number of external factors, but noting that the live export of sheep from WA recommenced on 14 September following the end of the northern summer export ban, this will provide an additional market for sheep.
- (3) The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has information available to farmers on seasonal conditions, options for managing sheep in a poor season, welfare decisions for sheep, humane destruction of sheep and links to WA's rural support services.
- (4) DPIRD has well established industry networks and that intelligence is used to formulate plans to help producers deal with difficult seasonal and market conditions.