

ORD RIVER RICE CROPS

808. Hon HELEN BULLOCK to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Regional Development:

I refer to the Ord River irrigation area rice crops in the East Kimberley planted by growers associated with Australian rice food company SunRice.

- (1) What was the yield per hectare of the harvested rice?
- (2) Was the yield high enough to continue trials?
- (3) Was the yield high enough to consider a commercial venture in the future; and, if yes, where will the rice be processed?
- (4) What was the cost of the rice growing trial, and how much was funded by the Western Australian government, the federal government and private enterprise?
- (5) How much was contributed from the royalties for regions fund towards the cost of the trial?

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN replied:

On behalf of the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Regional Development, I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The final out-turn of rice from the 2010 harvest was 1 440 tonnes from a total production area of 240 hectares. The commercial trial involved the use of a range of production variables, including rice varieties, optimal seeding times, seeding rates, growing techniques and fertiliser regimes. Yields per hectare varied, depending upon the variables. Consistent with the nature of the trial, the yields varied from four to 8.5 tonnes per hectare.
- (2) The yield, utilising some of the trial variables, is high enough for commercial growers to be committing to significantly greater areas of production for 2011.
- (3) Yes. The extent of processing and the location of processing for future crops will depend upon commercial considerations, including markets and scale of the industry. However, commercial considerations indicate that future rice crops would always be de-hulled in the Kimberley.
- (4) The cost of the 2010 commercial trial was wholly borne by the two commercial growers involved. Those costs are not known to government.
- (5) No funds were contributed from the royalties for regions fund toward the cost of the commercial trial.