

WATER FOR FOOD — WEST KIMBERLEY

3445. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Water:

I refer to the Water for Food program, and I ask:

- (a) how many sites have been identified in the West Kimberley as potentially suitable for agriculture;
- (b) how many hectares have been identified for each site that is potentially suitable for agriculture;
- (c) how many of the sites identified in (a), have been identified as agricultural areas that could be developed by:
 - (i) private interests; and
 - (ii) the Government;
- (d) will the Minister name the private companies or groups that have expressed an interest in developing agricultural areas in the West Kimberley;
- (e) if no to (d), why not;
- (f) has the Minister or the Department of Water or any other department involved in the Water for Food program discussed the possible acquisition of land surrounding the Curtin airbase for agricultural purposes with the Federal Government;
- (g) if yes to (f), has the Federal Government expressed an interest in selling the land;
- (h) is the Minister aware of cotton being grown on any pastoral lease in the Kimberley for commercial or research purposes;
- (i) if yes to (h), is the cotton a genetically modified (GM) variety;
- (j) if the cotton being grown in the Kimberley is a GM variety, does the grower have a licence for this from the GM regulator;
- (k) if the cotton being grown in the Kimberley is not a GM variety, what evidence does the Minister have that this is the case;
- (l) will the Minister rule out cotton, either GM or non-GM being grown in the West Kimberley; and
- (m) if no to (l), why not?

Hon Ken Baston replied:

- (a) Five
- (b) The five sites are:
 - Skuthorpe — 680 hectares
 - Gogo Pastoral Station — 5 000 hectares
 - Mowanjum Pastoral Station — 4 100 hectares
 - Knowsley Agricultural Area — 3 000 hectares
 - Curtin Airbase — 10 000 hectares
- (c)
 - (i) Five
 - (ii) Nil
- (d) Yes. Mowanjum Aboriginal Corporation and Gogo Station Pty Ltd.
- (e) Not Applicable
- (f) Yes
- (g) No
- (h) No
- (i) Not Applicable
- (j) Not Applicable
- (k) Not Applicable
- (l) No

- (m) Cotton is not a restricted crop and this Government is supportive of industry maximising the development potential of agricultural land including for GM crops.