

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD — ORGANIC FARMING RESEARCH

4204. Hon Lynn MacLaren to the Minister for Child Protection representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food
- (1) For each of the previous five financial years, what amount and what proportion of the budget of the WA Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF) has been allocated to and spent on researching, developing, promoting and marketing of organic farming and organic produce?
 - (2) For each of the previous five financial years, what amount and proportion of the budget of the DAF has been allocated to and spent on researching, developing, promoting and marketing of genetically modified organisms and crops?
 - (3) What proportion and amount of this year's DAF budget is allocated to the researching, developing, promoting and marketing of organic farming and organic produce?
 - (4) What proportion and amount of this year's DAF budget is allocated to the researching, developing, promoting and marketing of genetically modified organisms and crops?
 - (5) How many full time equivalent staff of the DAF are assigned to the researching, developing, promoting and marketing of organic farming and organic produce?
 - (6) How many full time equivalent staff of the DAF are assigned to the researching, developing, promoting and marketing of genetically modified organisms and crops?
 - (7) How many certified and 'undergoing certification' farmers are there in Western Australia, compared to ten years ago?
 - (8) In a 2005 Farmnote on organic farming in Western Australia, DAF stated that, 'Worldwide sales for organic foods is estimated to be valued at US\$31.3 billion in 2005 and displays annual growth of 10–30 per cent.' Has DAF provided more recent information to Western Australian farmers on the growth of organic farming and trade worldwide, and the opportunities to participate in this rapidly expanding sector?
 - (a) If yes to (8), when?
 - (b) Through what means has this information been provided?
 - (9) What action is the Government taking to encourage and enable Western Australian farmers to participate in the global expansion of organic farming?
 - (10) Has the Western Australian Government conducted and published a peer-reviewed risk assessment of the potential impact on the organic farming sector from the introduction of genetically modified food crops into Western Australia?
 - (11) If yes to (10), can the Minister table the assessment?
 - (12) If no to (10), why not?

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY replied:

- (1) Approximately \$100 000 annually is allocated for the specific activities around organics representing 0.07 per cent of the budget. In addition an estimated \$10 million is allocated on a diverse range of other activities that have direct benefit to organic producers, which represents over 6 per cent of the budget.
- (2) The amounts allocated were \$60 000 in 2008-09, \$460 000 in 2009-10 and \$2.5 million in 2010-11. These amounts represent 0.04 per cent, 0.3 per cent and 1.7 per cent of the budget respectively. Prior to 2008-09 Department's GMO-related activities were focused on regulation of GMOs and the provision of independent science-based information on GMOs.
- (3) \$100 000 or 0.07 per cent, with an additional \$10 million dollars or over 6 per cent for other activities which have direct benefit to the organics industry.
- (4) \$2.9 million which represents about 1.9 per cent of the budget.
- (5) 0.7 FTE specifically for organics and an estimated 100 FTE's for the other activities directly benefiting the organics industry.
- (6) 4.0 FTE's.
- (7) In 2010-11 there are 164 known farmers, compared to 110 ten years ago.

- (8) Yes
 - (a) Ongoing basis.
 - (b) Information is provided via direct personal communication, regular contribution to the Organic Association of Western Australia monthly electronic newsletter; presentations at various forums; and provision of information to various media organisations.
- (9) DAFWA provides support and assistance to the Organic Association of WA, and assistance in collective marketing initiatives relating to the organic livestock sector and organic fruit producers, A project to attract more organic broad-acre grain producers is being developed.
The Department provides ongoing trade development and related supply chain assistance to organic producers and food companies seeking markets, as well as to overseas buyers seeking to source organic products from WA.
- (10) No
- (11) Not applicable
- (12) The Australian Bureau of Agricultural Research Report, Potential impacts from the introduction of GM canola on organic farming in Australia, addresses this topic and was released in 2007.