

MIDLAND SALEYARDS

1443. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:

- (1) Does the minister agree that similar sheep numbers access Midland from the central wheatbelt, the northern agricultural region and the eastern wheatbelt as per the Western Australian Meat Industry Authority report?
- (2) If so, can this be used to justify the preference for the saleyards at Northam and not the multispecies sale facility at Moora, which would represent a capital cost saving to the State?
- (3) If the preferred split facility option at Muchea and Northam proceeds, what consideration has the minister given to facilitating increased live exports from regional ports as opposed to Fremantle?
- (4) Are reports from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and the Department of Agriculture available for comment and information?
- (5) If not, when will they be available?
- (6) Given that few saleyard facilities around Australia have received state government equity, has the minister considered the option of reducing this Government's equity in any plans to replace Midland?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) I note a reference in the 1999-2000 financial report of the Western Australian Meat Industry Authority that the Great Eastern Highway and the Great Northern Highway are routes of equal importance in the transportation of sheep to the Midland saleyard. Each highway transports 38 per cent of the total number of sheep to the saleyard.
- (2) I am considering a number of factors in my overall assessment of saleyard requirements, including the origins of livestock delivered to saleyards. One of the considerations is that 38 per cent of sheep going to Midland come from the Avon Valley.
- (3) I am maintaining liaison with livestock exporters on a range of matters, including which ports of shipment will be used in the future. The live export industry has told me that the bulk of the infrastructure is established in the metropolitan area. As such, it will continue to rely on the metropolitan area for the foreseeable future.
- (4) The member asked about the reports from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure on options for the relocation of the Midland saleyards. The reports are not available for comment and information.
- (5) I intend to release the Department of Agriculture's report on the saleyard relocation when I make a statement to the House. That will occur after additional consultation with the industry. The Department of Agriculture's report includes information from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure's report.
- (6) I am considering all the financial arrangements for the capacity of a new saleyard to replace the Midland saleyard as part of my assessment for future saleyards requirements. I know of only one state or territory government-owned facility, and that is at Katherine. That is not to say that the option of maintaining state government equity is not high on the Government's agenda. There are issues to be considered, particularly those raised by the financial needs of other saleyards in the State, as well as the matter of equity between producers in different parts of the State. Those issues are the subject of consultation.