

LAMB MARKETING, REDUCTION IN BRANDING

639. Hon M.J. CRIDDLE to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:

I refer to the impact on marketing of lamb resulting from excessive marking ink on carcasses and the concerns that that has caused. Will the minister give immediate consideration to a reduction in branding in line with the export environment and as supported by the National Meat Association?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

This is a very pertinent and topical question. I have addressed this matter with respect to the marketing of very small animals in the sheep and goat class, in particular with regard to capretto. The requirements were causing marketing difficulties because the size of the carcasses meant that they were virtually covered in ink if we applied the markings according to the rules. We are on the verge of achieving the appropriate changes to enable the application of a much smaller stamp rather than the line marker. I am unaware of the issue creating problems for full-size carcasses, although I am certain that the Department of Agriculture is aware of them. I will seek advice on that matter to determine why it has become an issue. We have been marking lamb carcasses for many years. If there has been a change in the nature of the marking procedure that is now causing a problem, obviously we will look at it. Alternatively, if the market has changed and is no longer as accepting of that marking system, we will look at changes to accommodate that. I will get advice on that and pass it on to the member.