

SALEYARD RELOCATION, MUCHEA AND NORTHAM

**1369. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:**

I have given the minister an indication of the content of my question. In the rural press today, an article on the saleyard relocation suggests that cattle and pigs will be sold at Muchea and sheep at Northam.

- (1) Has the decision to relocate the saleyard been made?
- (2) Has the minister considered the substantial road upgrades that will be required?
- (3) Have the planning and environmental needs been addressed?

**Hon KIM CHANCE replied:**

I thank Hon Murray Criddle for providing me with a copy of his question.

- (1) No, I have not yet made that decision. However, I am happy to say now that, on the basis of the evidence before me, I am inclined towards an outcome of the kind the member described. That is not a public statement of my position on the matter. I simply say that a credible case could be built for the separation of the saleyard facilities. I need to be careful to say that the Government's final position might be different from that. However, as the member has asked the question, I am happy to say that that is my present position.
- (2) To the extent that a study has been completed on one component of that outcome - that is, the Muchea component - the road and planning issues have certainly been studied by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, and I have had that report for some time. That report was predicated on a multipurpose facility that would handle both sheep and cattle. Therefore, I do not think any further study would be needed if a decision were made for a split facility, such as the member has described. What has not been studied in that context is the possibility of a stand-alone sheep facility at Northam. However, we know sufficient about the transport and logistical dynamics of sheep saleyard facility needs in that area to say that given that the likely location of such a facility, were it to be located near Northam, would be adjacent to the Northam bypass, and given that a substantial proportion of the sheep that currently use Midland, and, we expect, would use the Northam facility, come from the Avon Valley - I think somewhere between 37 and 40 per cent of current saleyard take-up by sheep is made up of sheep from the Avon Valley region - the transport logistical questions should pose no risks for us. The short answer is no, but the more complete answer is that I do not think it would take long to do, and I do not think we would get any nasty surprises if we were to do a separate study.
- (3) No. In respect of all planning and environmental questions regarding both Muchea and the Northam site, and, for that matter, the Moora site, the final Environmental Protection Authority work cannot really be started until a specific site has been identified. All we can get from the EPA about the prospective location of a site is a prospective opinion. It will not be until such time as we say that we have bought or intend to buy a certain location number for this purpose that the EPA's work can begin. The answer is much the same regarding the Western Australian Planning Commission's advice. It will not be until we identify a particular use on a particular site - we have identified no particular site, even at Muchea - that that work can begin. Therefore, the answer to (3) is no, but work would not be expected to begin until a decision was made.