

Question No: 246

Question: Primary Industry

Date: 17/11/92

Member: Mr BELL

To: MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. Has the review of Animal Health Services in the Northern Territory by Dr Nieper and Dr Neithe been completed; if so, will the minister table the report.
2. What are the purposes for which advances of \$417 000 are expected to be provided by Industry Schemes Management in 1992-93.
3. For what purposes was the NSW Department of Agriculture engaged as a consultant in 1991-92.
4. What arrangements have been put in place to operate grain receival depots at Douglas/Daly and Katherine for the 1992-93 grain season.
5. What agreements have been entered into in regard to payments that will be made to the private operator by -
 - (a) the NT government;
 - (b) the NT Grain Marketing Board; and
 - (c) grain growers.
6. How many Type D BTEC loans were provided in 1991-92 and for what purposes.
7. What are the details of the one-off DPIF payment in 1991-92 which was provided to cover loan commitments.

ANSWER

1. The Nieper/Neithe Review was completed in August 1991. It made a range of recommendations which are being progressively considered by the department and by Cabinet. Those recommendations in the review relating to service delivery are now being dealt with in detail within the department and Cabinet expects a report early in 1993. After Cabinet has received and considered that report, I expect that I will be able to table a copy of the review.
2. The amount of \$417 000 represents the department's commitment in 1992-93 in respect of servicing semi-government loans provided to the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority (ADMA) in 1982 for the construction of grain handling facilities. The amount comprises principal and interest components on the loans payable to the NT Treasury during the year. Although the ADMA was abolished in June 1990, the DPIF continues to be responsible to service its commitments.
3. The New South Wales Department of Agriculture provided a highly respected Beef Cattle Husbandry Officer from its staff to assist the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries in conducting 2 schools for NT pastoralists in the Southern Region during 1991-92. The schools are part of an affirmative action program undertaken by the NT department to improve property management on Northern Territory pastoral properties.

4. The grain receival depots at Katherine and Douglas/Daly have been leased to a private company, Crennex Pty Ltd effective from July 1992. The NT Grain Marketing Board has entered arrangements for that company to act as its agents for the handling of vested grains and other grains consigned to the board. A full range of grain receiving and handling services will be provided at the depots in 1992-93, similar to those provided in past seasons. In addition, the company will provide a range of its own commercial services to producers and consumers from these premises.

5. The company undertaking the operations of the grain depots does so in terms of a joint agreement executed with the NT government (Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries) and the NT Grain Marketing Board. In terms of this agreement the operator is required to meet all operating and general repair and maintenance costs in providing grain receiving and handling services to the growers and the board. The Northern Territory government continues to be the owner of the assets and remains responsible for asset replacement and major works.

In return for the provision of services, the company receives from the NT Grain Marketing Board (funded by the NT government), a service fee equivalent in the first year of operations to \$92 000, plus an amount of \$12 per tonne for each tonne of grain passing through the depots. The NT Grain Marketing Board, for its part, has set a handling charge for the 1992-93 season payable by growers, of 12 per tonne.

6. One only BTEC Type D loan was provided in 1991-92. The loan was in the amount of \$30 600 and was for the purpose of providing fencing and the upgrade of stock water supply.

7. A one-off payment of \$550 735 was made to NT Treasury in 1991-92 in reduction of principal on semi-government loans serviced by the department. This payment reduced the amounts outstanding in respect of the former ADMA.