



Kon Vatskalis

MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

07 April 2006

KATHERINE BEEF CATTLE PRODUCTION SET TO RISE

Beef cattle numbers in the Katherine Region have the potential to increase by 25% over the next five years, and by 42% in the next 10 years - according to Katherine pastoralists.

This is the major finding of the first comprehensive survey of all the Territory's pastoral regions.

The survey was conducted by the Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines (DPIFM), in collaboration with industry, through the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association (NTCA).

The results were released by Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Kon Vatskalis at the annual meeting of the NTCA in Darwin today.

The region, often referred to as the heartland of the Territory pastoral industry, is poised to capitalise on a series of improved production and land management techniques.

Minister Vatskalis said Katherine producers based their estimates on plans for infrastructure development, allowing them to increase the carrying capacity of their stations.

"60 of the 85 cattle producers in the region were interviewed. Between them, they run about 597,000 cattle – about one-third of the Territory total – on properties averaging 2200 square kilometres.

"The region stretches from the world-famous Victoria River District in the west, across to the Roper and Gulf districts in the east.

"Producers in the Katherine region send about 88 % of their turn-off to South East Asia – mostly Brahman and Brahman cross – and their contribution to the Territory pastoral industry is immense.

"The industry has undergone significant change since 1982, with production such as weaning increasing from 45 % to 71%. This is due to improved management, more adapted animals and more profitable markets for the sale of cattle.

The Territory is divided into four pastoral regions: the Top End, Katherine, Barkly and Alice Springs.

Mr Vatskalis said the survey is a definitive guide to the methods, problems, attitudes, successes and issues faced by pastoralists in the Alice Springs Region.

"It gives the industry an up-to-date picture of management practices so that future directions for research and development can be more relevant."

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