



**Andrew  
CRIPPS MP**  
Member for Hinchinbrook



for a new Queensland

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**For immediate release**

### **Bligh challenged to start supporting farmers**

PREMIER Anna Bligh has been challenged to ditch her government's long-standing animosity to rural Queensland and develop decent policies to help get agriculture back on track.

LNP Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Queensland Andrew Cripps said the Premier was addressing AgForce's annual general meeting on the Sunshine Coast today and farmers needed to hear how she intended to reverse Labor's years of neglect.

"The AgForce AGM is focussing on food security and the challenges farmers face to feed an increasingly hungry world," Mr Cripps said.

"The challenge for the Premier is to stop Labor's years of destruction and actually do something – formulate some commonsense policies to actually help Queensland farmers."

Mr Cripps said Labor had done its best to all but destroy the once proud Department of Primary Industries and its world-class grains, beef and dairy research teams and frontline support and inspection staff who actually worked in the field with farmers.

"Labor has stripped funds from the DPI budget, slashed research and forced crop scientists and vets to leave to the point where the merged department is a shell of its former self.

"Labor has sold off DPI assets – research stations and herds, including the only tropical research dairy herd in the world – as well as our agricultural colleges and their assets.

"Anna Bligh needs to appoint a new Minister with drive and vision to bring real leadership to the DPI to again help farmers and their industries get on with the job of producing safe, top-quality food and fibre for which Queensland is renowned."

Mr Cripps said while Labor was relying solely on mining to pull it out of its financial mess, the LNP was committed to supporting and fostering agriculture and getting farm industries back on track.

"Agriculture is one of our four pillar industries, along with mining, construction and tourism – and that's why the LNP has developed commonsense policies including making the DPI a stand-alone department again and re-focussing its efforts on frontline services that farmers need and appreciate."

Mr Cripps said LNP Leader Campbell Newman would launch the LNP's comprehensive Agriculture Policy strategy at the AgForce AGM tomorrow.

"Without giving too much away, it's an ambitious strategy with a 30-year vision to double food production with a long term focus on water and transport infrastructure, a clear focus on R&D to boost farm productivity and a big lift in training including revamping our ag colleges to again make them world-class."

Mr Cripps said Queensland farmers had been "under-valued" by Labor for too long.

"The LNP is committed to reversing Labor's run-down to get ag back on track."

**Media contact: Andrew Cripps 0407 741 997**

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Contact: Andrew Cripps MP  
Member for Hinchinbrook

Address: PO Box 1515  
Ingham Qld 4850

Ph: 07 4776 1428  
Fax: 07 4776 3503

E-mail: [Hinchinbrook@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:Hinchinbrook@parliament.qld.gov.au)

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