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Title:
Speech launching book on dry-land farming

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29.3.76

My Ministerial colleague Brian Chatterton, Mr. Trumble, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen :

When Brian Chatterton asked me to launch this book, I accepted gladly because its contents and purpose are indicative of the changes which have occurred in agricultural production and marketing.

One of the major changes has been in the role Government should play, and in South Australia the State Government has taken the initiative in providing new services for South Australia's agricultural community.

In the case of dry land farming, we have encouraged the many individuals and companies who have developed expertise in this farming system to work together. From this South Australia has been able to market a complete dry land farming package, which encompasses the whole farming process from seeds to harvesting and storage machinery.

South Australia has been able to develop this technology because, agriculturally speaking, we are not the most over-endowed State in Australia. Our soils and climate are not as favourable to intensive farming as many other parts of the country, so farmers in this State have developed specialist techniques to maximise their returns from what are very often meagre natural resources.

Our dry land farming technique is applicable to many other parts of the world that have similar soils and climates, and South Australia has the opportunity to assist those countries and at the same time provide new markets for our own industries by sharing our knowledge and experience.

Many countries are very interested in dry land farming; already in Libya we have a very successful demonstration farm and several other countries in the region want to talk to us about similar ventures. Originally my overseas trip was to start with visits to Libya and Algeria to discuss these projects, but the Premiers' Conference means that I will not be able to do so. However, the Director General of Trade and Development, Bill Davies, will still visit those countries and I am sure he will gain considerably from his trip, although the Libyan Government in particular was pressing for head of government level talks.

The Middle East countries now have the financial resources and the governmental intention to improve their agricultural techniques. We have had many delegations from countries in the region come to South Aust to look at our techniques and equipment, and often they come only to South Aust because they believe that this State can provide all the resources they require.

Although we have established an excellent reputation for technology, expertise and trade, we must not become complacent. There are other States and other countries that can provide similar information, and would certainly like to cash in on the trade potential in the area.

We must ensure that the lead we have established is maintained.

This book on dry land farming is one way of ensuring that South Australia stays in the forefront.

I would like to compliment those involved in putting this book together, particularly the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Tourist Bureau.

It is significant in the final chapter that South Australia's Minister of Agriculture, Brian Chatterton, shows clearly that, as a State, we can offer technical advice on more than agriculture. We have expertise in town planning road building, irrigation and the development of water supplies.

In providing this additional technology and advice there is a natural spin-off in the form of trade particularly for private industry.

Occasionally the Government is criticised for its involvement in areas that have been considered traditionally the domain of private enterprise, but this book is an excellent example of cooperation between the government and industry. The benefits of that cooperation will help the entire community, in particular private industry.

Certainly there were a number of South Australian firms trading in the Middle East before our Government entered the field. However, we have been able to demonstrate to these countries that as a State we have the total resources and the expertise that they want.

This, I believe, is one of the big advantages of this book - it presents South Australia's dry land farming system as a package deal.

It is to our advantage to offer our expertise and trade and indeed our farming system as a package. In doing so, there will be many advantages to the companies who manufacture farm machinery and goods.

We have already developed extensive trade with some Middle East countries (our trade with Iraq alone is worth more than \$40 million a year) and I am sure that this is only the beginning.

This book, which was produced at Brian Chatterton's suggestion, will greatly assist our efforts.

With Brian Chatterton as Minister of Agriculture, South Australia will be among the leaders of the marketing and production changes which are transforming agriculture around the world. The Government and the State are very lucky to have such a forward thinking and innovative Minister who can produce exciting new books such as this one on dry land farming systems in S.

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