

FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Statement by Minister for Agriculture and Food

MR D.T. REDMAN (Blackwood-Stirling — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [2.07 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the Food Industry Association WA awards held on Friday night. The awards attracted over 100 entries from almost 50 companies and were a wonderful showcase of the agriculture and food industry in Western Australia. They were presented at a gala dinner and ball attended by 450 people. I think the simple fact that the tickets for the event were sold out reflects the strength and the confidence in the industry.

It was only a few years ago that the words “and Food” were added to the name of the agriculture portfolio. Those words are very significant. Western Australia has always been and will continue to be a major exporter of bulk commodities, but it is the processing, the value adding and the “and Food” part of the portfolio in which the greatest gains can be made. To achieve those gains requires hard work, fresh thinking as well as a commitment to excellence, and all those qualities were on display on Friday night. It was striking the number of times the words “world’s first” or “world’s largest” popped up during the course of the evening.

The range of award categories included best retail product to environment and sustainability to best marketing campaign. Alba Edible Oils won the environment category for installing a new refinery that reduced its energy consumption by 65 per cent. WR Carpenter won the export category for increasing sales of Wagyu beef to Japan by 250 per cent despite the economic downturn. The Village Kitchen won the food service product category for becoming the only company in Australia to produce single-serve desserts for hospitals according to the individual dietary requirements of patients. Challenge Australia Dairy won the supply chain award for its work with A2 milk, which involves identifying and separating cows that carry the A2 gene to produce milk that overcomes a variety of allergies and digestive issues. Challenge Dairy, which directly employs more than 150 people in the south west, was also named the overall winner. In just four years, the company has moved from manufacturing base commodities to a full range of value-added products and seen its revenue base increase from \$35 million to \$100 million a year. It has also forged an extensive network throughout South East Asia and is exporting Western Australian products to Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and China.

I congratulate all the award winners and all those who entered. I am already looking forward to next year when the awards will once again showcase how the Western Australian food industry is leading the world.