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WESFARMERS ANNOUNCES CURRAGH MINE OVERBURDEN CONTRACT

Following on from the announcement on 10 November 2009 to expand the Wesfarmers-owned Curragh mine in Queensland's Bowen basin Wesfarmers Curragh has signed a new long term contract with Thiess Pty Ltd for increased overburden removal at its Curragh mine.

The expansion is expected to see export metallurgical coal sales from the Curragh mine increase from current levels of 6.5 to 7.0 million tonnes per annum ("mtpa") to 8.0 to 8.5 mtpa from late 2011, subject to market conditions.

The Thiess contract will result in the Curragh North mining area utilising an ultra-class fleet with Curragh and Thiess to be operating some of the largest earth moving equipment in Australia from mid 2011.

The Managing Director of Wesfarmers Resources, Mr Stewart Butel, said that this new contract was about achieving cost efficiencies by up scaling to a larger fleet of equipment.

"From mid 2011 we will see the deployment of a new Bucyrus 495HR electric shovel which will be the first of its kind to be used in Australia. It will operate in conjunction with a fleet of Liebherr 282C ultra-class trucks each with a 360 tonne capacity which will be the first of their kind to be used in Queensland," Mr Butel said.

This long term contract is a continuation of the excellent relationship Curragh has enjoyed with Thiess since 2004 when operations commenced at Curragh North.

"We are very pleased to be continuing the relationship we have with Thiess who have undertaken infrastructure construction, overburden removal and coal mining works at our Curragh North operation and we look forward to continuing this relationship over the next 10 years." Mr Butel said.

With the new Stanwell Agreement in place, construction of the new coal handling plant now underway, rail and port capacity in place and now the long-term overburden contract Wesfarmers is well placed to take advantage of the forecast increase in seaborne metallurgical coal demand.

This expansion reinforces Wesfarmers commitment to maximising the potential of the Curragh mine and generating satisfactory returns for its shareholders.

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