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Survey results reveal Next G still not reliable

NSW Farmers' Association has today released the preliminary results of a state wide survey showing 71% of respondents have found the CDMA network to be more reliable than the new Next G network.

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie said farmers still had concerns with a number of aspects of the Next G network including in-call drop outs, handset performance, car-kit reliance, poor and unreliable reception and Message Bank problems.

"The Association has passed on the survey results to the National Farmers' Federation, who are in discussions with the Federal Government regarding farmers' feedback on Next G," Mr Laurie said.

"To date, Telstra Country Wide has been committed to addressing our issues," Mr Laurie.

Mr Laurie said many of the survey respondents indicated that whilst they had adequate phone coverage with CDMA, they now have little to no service with Next G.

"People in rural communities rely on their mobile phones as a safety mechanism to be able to call for help in the event of an emergency – so the network must be reliable," Mr Laurie said.

One of the most common concerns raised by Members was that car-kits were needed to get a Next G signal, while CDMA phones worked unassisted.

"While car kits are of benefit on the road, they are irrelevant when farmers are on quad bikes, working on foot, in the tractor or on a horse," Mr Laurie said.

However, 38% of people said reception didn't change when a car-kit was used, 36% said they had difficulty acquiring appropriate accessories, with many reporting Next G signals fading just 20 kilometres from a major town.

"A common problem reported by Members was calls going straight to Message Bank despite the handset indicating there was a signal," Mr Laurie said.

Of the 1,200 people who responded to the survey, 23% had not made the switch to Next G, despite the 28 January CDMA deadline fast approaching.

More than 800 respondents also asked that the Association pass on their details to Telstra to discuss their individual Next G concerns.

"These details have been forwarded on to Telstra Country Wide and it is my understanding that they are working on those responses as we speak," Mr Laurie said.

"We have been working with Telstra Country Wide for several months now to highlight issues our members have with Next G and we will continue to do so until these problems are addressed," Mr Laurie said.

Contact: Ellen McNamara (Media Officer) 0429 990 218