

2008 Annual Conference

30 Years As One Voice

Media Release



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Farmers issue challenge – secure food supplies in Australia!

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie has issued a challenge to the Australian community to help agriculture find a balance to meet future food production demands - at a time when many in the farming community are facing an uncertain future.

In his opening address to the Association's Annual Conference at Homebush, Sydney, Mr Laurie said agricultural inflation has hit 14%, with input costs skyrocketing.

"The increase in agricultural inflation shows that farmers are facing input costs that are increasing faster than then that of the CPI," Mr Laurie said.

"The industry is at crossroads, with many farmers facing a myriad of issues affecting the way they do business – but we need to find a way forward to ensure community demands don't continue to affect food production.

Mr Laurie said the increased demand from the mining and forestry sectors for agricultural land, water uncertainty issues in the irrigation industry and animal welfare demands are also factors that are impacting on agricultural production.

"There's a need for the community is to reassess its demands to government that is forcing policy development that interferes with food production in Australia.

"We want to see sustainable environmental practices, sustainable food production levels and also prosperous rural communities – so farmers can continue to do what they do best," Mr Laurie said

"Most of the time farmers are price-takers not price-makers – however, if the cost of production is too great, then we are facing a situation that it will become unviable for some farmers to continue," Mr Laurie said.

During his address to conference, Mr Laurie said the Federal Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is one of the biggest challenges facing the agricultural industry and government.

"While farmers must be able to increase production levels over the next 10 years to meet predicted demands, we also need to balance the issue of reduced carbon emissions," Mr Laurie said.

"We need research and development programs to find new technologies to allow farmers to face the challenges before them.

"Agriculture in this country can have a bright future, but if costly community demand

continues, then it must take responsibility for finding a viable way forward for food production.

Mr Laurie addressed more than 450 farmers from around the State this morning at the NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference at Homebush.

The NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference continues until Thursday 31 July.

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