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Drought assistance for Bega farmers welcomed

The NSW Farmers' Association has welcomed today's Federal Government announcement that interim drought assistance will be provided to farmers in the Bega Valley.

The Association approached State and Federal Governments to review the area and from today all farmers in the Bega Valley area can apply for up to six months of income support.

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie says the decision is positive news for Bega Valley farmers following the expiration of Exceptional Circumstances (EC) drought support in September last year for that region.

"Conditions in the Bega Valley have continued to remain dry. With pastures in very poor condition and limited water availability, many farmers are hand feeding stock and carting water," Mr Laurie said.

According to Mr Laurie, whilst the announcement will mean immediate interim support is available for farmers in the area the Association would like to see a full declaration announced for these farmers.

"We encourage the National Rural Advisory Council (NRAC) to promptly consider the area for full EC assistance to provide local farmers with greater certainty as they head into the winter months."

Mr Laurie says that while the Association applauds the announcement for the Bega Valley area, the Federal Government is yet to respond to calls for many remaining areas of NSW to be reviewed, following the expiration of their EC status at the end of March and April.

"The NSW Government provided a request to the Federal Government in March this year and as yet no response has been forthcoming.

"Farmers in many of these areas continue to face dry conditions and with no autumn break many farmers are facing the prospect of poor conditions through winter.

"We urge the Federal Government to respond quickly to applications for drought assistance reviews in NSW," Mr Laurie concluded.

Contact:

Lyndsey Douglas (Communications Officer) 02 8251 1868

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