

Media Release

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Clarity needed for drought assistance

The NSW Farmers' Association is concerned there have been some mixed messages to farmers in the northern region of NSW, including Tamworth, Coonabraban, Narrabri and Bingara about the roll over of Exceptional Circumstances (EC) assistance.

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie says the Association believes that the Federal Government should provide clarification on the areas that have not been rolled over for EC and encourage farmers to contact relevant authorities for more information.

"Farmers in the northern region of NSW stretching from Goondiwindi to Merriwa and Gilgandra to Tamworth should be aware of the changes that will occur to their EC status on 30 September," Mr Laurie said.

The Federal Government recently announced that the majority of EC declarations in NSW would be rolled over until 31 March 2009, but certain areas in northern NSW have not been included.

The vast majority of the Central North-North West EC declared area will not be rolled over on 30 September. At this stage only Division C of the Coonamble RLPB, the western portion of Division B in the Northern New England RLPB, and the north western portion of Division D in the Northern New England RLPB (roughly north west of a line between Nullamanna and Deepwater) have been rolled over, and the remainder of the central north – north west EC declared area has not been rolled over.

Only the southern area of the North-East Northern New England area has been rolled over.

"If Members have concerns about the announcement and EC declared areas please contact the Association's regional service managers and let them know as soon as possible," Mr Laurie said.

The Association is aware that Centrelink is currently contacting all those in EC declared areas that are accessing Income Support.

The Association encourages all farmers with questions regarding their support status to either contact the Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593 or Centrelink on 132 316 or through the Association on 1300 794 000.

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