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## Government challenged to fund for the future

Farmers are telling Government today to seriously invest in research or watch the farming sector crumble.

Farming representatives at the NSW Farmers' Association Executive Council in Sydney have voiced their irritation at repeat threats to close Government funded agricultural research facilities in NSW and general underfunding into research.

NSW Farmers' Association President Charles Armstrong says that while the Association is relieved at the recent Government decision to save eight threatened research stations, it's a case of history repeating itself.

"In 2004 the NSW Department of Primary Industries proposed the closure of 12 research stations; fortunately a moratorium was placed on their closures. But here we are again in 2009, with eight stations again threatened and then saved," Mr Armstrong said.

"The ideology is all wrong. We need to stop looking at research stations as cash cows and start putting serious funding into them.

"Agriculture is looking down the barrel of major challenges, particularly with climate change policy looming, and research is the only way up for the sector to continue to improve efficiencies and remain internationally competitive.

"The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme proposed by the Federal Government will impose a huge burden on agriculture and food security. Research and Development is essential for agriculture to survive and continue to provide the food Australian's enjoy," Mr Armstrong said.

The Association has long expressed its disapproval of the closure of agricultural research facilities and has provided budget submissions to Government over the last four years calling for increased funding and resources for the NSW Department of Primary Industries to ensure research stations and resources continue to be made available.

"We are hopeful that these stations with the support of the farmers that benefit in their work won't be asked to quantify their worth time and time again when their viability is threatened," Mr Armstrong said.

"Instead, we would like to see the NSW Government backing this valuable sector and helping us to prepare for the future with research and development measures corresponding to the worth of agriculture to this State," Mr Armstrong concluded.

### Contact:

**Ellen McNamara (Media Officer) 0429 990 218**

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