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Heavy rains dampen hopes of a bumper harvest

The NSW Farmers' Association is flagging the need for rescue measures for grain growers as heavy rainfall threatens this year's Winter crop harvest.

NSW Farmers' Association President Charles Armstrong says this year's forecast \$3 billion harvest in NSW has little chance of eventuating.

"The rains are severely downgrading the quality of crops in NSW, as well as Queensland and Victoria," Mr Armstrong said.

"This is coming as a cruel blow to many farmers who've spent the past decade waiting for the drought to break.

"Many are facing the prospect of weather-damaged grain, which could have a devastating impact on their incomes.

"Grain growers need some security, with only a few months left until Exceptional Circumstances drought assistance measures are due to expire," Mr Armstrong said.

The Association is inviting Federal Agriculture Minister Joe Ludwig, Shadow Minister John Cobb, Independent Tony Windsor and NSW Primary Industries Minister Steve Whan to meet with growers from affected cropping regions in NSW.

"The way this crop is handled will dictate how much cropping is conducted in 2011," Mr Armstrong said.

"Growers are still adjusting to deregulation, and need an assurance their livelihoods will be protected during this extreme weather event," Mr Armstrong said.

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