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## **Diagnostics services must be maintained**

The NSW Farmers' Association is seeking to ensure that proposed changes to diagnostics testing facilities at NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) sites across the State will have no negative impact on farmers.

NSW Farmers' Association Cattle Committee Chair Richard Chamen believes the downgrading of the Wollongbar and Orange veterinary laboratories, announced by the NSW DPI last week, must come with an assurance that the integrity, timeliness and cost of any future testing procedures will be maintained.

"Sample testing conducted by veterinary labs like those at Wollongbar and Orange are vital in the management of diseases and biosecurity for all livestock producers," Mr Chamen said.

"Testing labs allow results from autopsies to be tested to determine the status of any diseases – a critical step in ensuring our livestock industries remain disease free.

"The DPI is proposing to downgrade two of their five service laboratories and centralise resources in the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) at Menangle.

"While we have no objection to boosting the services offered at EMAI, in doing so, livestock owners in NSW need to be reassured that the disease control system is not compromised," Mr Chamen said.

The Association is seeking an assurance from NSW DPI that any future testing arrangements will provide reliable, accurate testing results in a timely manner and with no added cost for producers.

"We are particularly adamant that DPI will need to establish firm protocols to ensure the collection and transport of samples is managed appropriately," Mr Chamen concluded.

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