

PR/242/07

Monday 17 September, 2007.

EC funding extension welcome relief

The NSW Farmers' Association has welcomed today's announcement from the Prime Minister that Exceptional Circumstances (EC) drought declarations will be extended until September next year for the majority of EC declared areas across NSW.

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie says with the situation rapidly deteriorating across NSW, the extension of EC beyond March 2008 will bring relief for many farmers.

"For farmers to know that they may be eligible for extended assistance is very important," Mr Laurie said.

"We welcome this recognition of the seriousness of the drought situation facing so many farmers. We are very pleased to see our discussions and meetings have resulted in this very positive outcome," Mr Laurie said.

"In NSW, many crops have already failed, and many more will do the same if it doesn't rain this week," he said.

"The rainfall outlook is not good, and people have run out of time. The ramifications of failed successive crops will be felt throughout the agricultural sector, particularly grain fed intensive industries including dairy, pork, chicken meat and egg. Our horticulture members are also under intense pressure.

"The extensive livestock industries will also feel the pinch, because the reality is there will be no or very little feed available.

"We look forward to continuing to work with the Federal Government on ensuring the best possible support is provided to farmers in this terribly difficult time," Mr Laurie concluded.

Contact: Ellen McNamara (Media Officer) 0429 990 218

Fast fact: Common farmer efficiency measure shows farm gate prices for Australian commodities equal the international price benchmark