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North Coast hail damage help

The NSW Farmers' Association is welcoming the NSW Government's announcement of Natural Disaster Relief Assistance for North Coast farmers affected by the recent hail storms in that region.

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie says horticulture producers were severely affected by the October 9 storms, with damage exceeding \$2.23 million on farms inspected to date.

"Growers have described to me heavy rain, golf size hailstones and wind gusts of more than 80 km per hour, so you can just imagine the impact this had on the agricultural industries in that region," Mr Laurie said.

"Lismore, Byron Bay and Ballina regions have had to mop up damage to a wide range of horticultural products, including macadamia, stone fruit, custard apples, mango, coffee, tea, blueberries and lychees," he said.

"Not only have people lost produce, but there has been major damage to hail netting and other infrastructure.

"The Government's provision of some relief assistance will be very welcome to those farmers who are eligible," he said.

To be eligible growers must demonstrate they are in urgent need of assistance, that they earn the majority of their income from primary production, and that they are in working occupation of the affected farm.

"The assistance comes in the form of loans of up to \$130,000, at 2.85 per cent interest per annum with a two-year interest free and repayment free period," Mr Laurie said.

"I would urge all farmers to look into this assistance, which they can apply for through the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593," Mr Laurie concluded.

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Fast fact: The average broadacre farm in NSW has a turnover of approximately \$248 500, with a farm cash income of around \$37 300

