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Four days remain for farmers to book their spot at Annual Conference

Farmers around the State have until this Friday to book a spot at the NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference in Sydney.

More than 400 farmers are expected to attend Annual Conference; the largest annual gathering of farmers in NSW.

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie says the Conference, now entering its 31st year, sets the direction for the Association and the issues facing agriculture for the coming year.

"There is no doubt that this year will go down as one of the most challenging years for farmers in recent times, with ongoing drought, climate variability, water scarcity, the global financial crisis and the global food crisis among the major issues facing agriculture and rural communities," Mr Laurie said.

"But despite these hardships, farmers remain adaptive, resilient and focused on the future, and Annual Conference provides the ideal forum for farmers to come together to debate potential solutions for these and other issues," Mr Laurie said.

More than 250 towns will be represented at Annual Conference, with delegates travelling a combined total of 12,000 kilometres to take part in shaping the future direction of the industry.

"The combined voice of all our Members gives the Association the ability to make real and tangible change, and we encourage all farmers to get involved in this process," Mr Laurie said.

"The future of farming in NSW relies on a whole-of-industry approach, and this is what we are aiming to achieve at this year's Annual Conference," Mr Laurie said.

As well as debate on policy and lobbying activities, the Conference will also feature many special events including the announcement of the prestigious Farmer and Young Farmer of the Year Awards and Tertiary Scholarship recipients, and the third annual Regional Food Fair, showcasing the best produce from across the State.

This year's Annual Conference will also see the election of a new Association President, with Jock Laurie stepping down from this position after completing a maximum four years at the helm.

The NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference will be held at the Sydney Showground from Tuesday 28 to Thursday 30 July 2009. Farmers interested in attending must be nominated as a delegate by their local District Council, with all details to be submitted to the Association by 5pm this Friday 29 May.

Local District Council contact information can be found by calling the Association's Member Service Centre on 1300 794 000. Further information on Annual Conference 2009 is available on the Conference website: www.ac.org.au.

Note for Radio: Audio grabs from NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie are available on our website (www.nswfarmers.org.au/media_centre/audio_grabs).

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