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Farmers call for action on agricultural research stations

The NSW Farmers' Association is calling on the NSW Government to make clear its intentions for agricultural research stations across the State.

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie says the time has come for the Government's inaction on research stations to be addressed.

"The Government has failed to commit one way or another on the research station issue," Mr Laurie said.

"In November 2008, the Minister for Primary Industries announced that certain research stations would be consolidated or closed. Now, some eight months later, the Government is still yet to provide clarity on exactly what is happening with each of the research stations in question," Mr Laurie said.

Association President Jock Laurie and Treasurer Charles Armstrong have met with the Minister three times, including a meeting last week to fight for a reversal of the decision, and according to the Association the response has been inadequate.

"We are not getting answers on this issue and we are therefore calling on the Government to make its intentions known," Mr Armstrong said.

"At a time when the nation's economy is facing many challenges, including a global food shortage and an increasing world population, research and development is needed more than ever to ensure that our State's farmers can produce more with less," Mr Armstrong said.

The eight research stations proposed for closure were Alstonville, Berry, Condobolin, Glen Innes, Gosford, Griffith, Jindabyne Hatchery and Temora.

Since this time, Gosford and Jindabyne Hatchery have been saved from an uncertain future thanks to local community collaboration and lobbying, but this still leaves in doubt the other research stations.

In April Mr Armstrong was quoted saying that the rallies that were held around these areas were an indication of the value each community places on retaining the people and their particular station.

"Every station has different specialities suited to the geography and climate of its region," Mr Armstrong said.

"Today, the Government is refusing to confirm if these stations, their facilities and the research undertaken at each will be cut. It has become a matter of urgency for the Minister to act.

"We have not seen any alternatives proposed by the Government, nor a strong commitment to ensuring research programs will continue," Mr Armstrong concluded.

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