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Entries open for top farming award

Applications are now open for the 2010 NSW Farmer of the Year and Young Farmer of the Year Awards, with prize money of up to \$10 000 up for grabs.

NSW Farmers' Association President, Charles Armstrong and Minister for Primary Industries, Steve Whan, are encouraging all farmers to throw their hats in the ring.

Minister Whan says the annual awards recognise excellence in agriculture through new and innovative management approaches and sustainable and profitable farming management skills.

"There are many challenges facing farmers across the State, yet they remain resilient, determined and adaptable – three qualities highly valued by the Farmer of the Year judges," Minister Whan said.

"Our judges know all too well how tough this drought has been, not to mention issues such as climate variability, water scarcity and even floods, so they are looking for farmers that have put the best strategies in place."

NSW Farmers Association President Charles Armstrong said the Awards finalists play an important part in promoting the sector and educating urban audiences about farmer's contributions on many levels.

"As land managers, the environmental and innovation credentials of farmers are sometimes overlooked, so we want farmers that can share their approaches with their industry peers, and also act as ambassadors to the broader community," he said.

"The Awards are a celebration of our industries' achievements and resilience, so I would strongly encourage any of the innovative farmers of NSW to enter."

Walgett grazier and dryland cropping farmer Michael O'Brien, winner of the 2009 title, described the Award as a rewarding experience.

Commercial and stud cattle farmers Stephen and Amity Chase of Trangie, took out the 2009 Young Farmers title.

The Awards are an initiative of the NSW Farmers' Association and Industry & Investment NSW, with support from The Land and the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. The Young Farmer of the Year Award is open to farmers aged 16-35 years, while the Farmer of the Year Award is open to all farmers aged over 35 years.

The Young Farmer receives \$5,000, and the Farmer of the Year wins \$10,000.

Application forms are available at www.nswfarmers.org.au or at www.industry.nsw.gov.au, and entries close Thursday 10 June.

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