



MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES
MINISTER FOR ENERGY
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES
MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 26 June 2008

NSW Farming excellence awards – Young farmer finalists announced

A vegetable producer from the Sydney basin and a merino sheep breeder from Molong have been named as the finalists in this year's Young Farmer of the Year awards.

Tally Matthews, a vegetable and turf producer from Ebenezer on Sydney's outskirts, and Ben Watts, a merino sheep producer from Molong in the State's Central West, have been selected as the 2008 Young Farmer of the Year finalists.

NSW Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald said the judges were impressed with applicants in this year's young farmer category, who represented great commitment and fresh ideas for the future of farming.

"These two finalists are particularly outstanding, they are showing strong commitment to both production and environmental challenges facing farmers today," Minister Macdonald said.

"They are innovative, self starters, who have shown great passion for their industries and worked hard to achieve good production at a relatively young age."

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie said the judges faced such a tough challenge in the Farmer of the Year category that interviews would be conducted with a select group of applicants before the finalists were announced.

"We have been very impressed with this year's applicants, particularly considering the tough conditions being faced by everyone on the land in the current drought situation," he said.

"Our entrants have excellent stories about applying strong production and sustainability approaches on their properties – and implementing innovation across a range of industries."

The successful 'Farmer of the Year' will be awarded \$10,000, with the 'Young Farmer of the Year' taking home \$5,000, and will be announced on 30 July at the NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference Dinner.

The annual awards are coordinated by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and NSW Farmers' Association, and supported by Rural Press and the Royal Agricultural Society.

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