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Deputy Premier of NSW
Minister for Regional NSW

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Minister for Primary Industries
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MEDIA RELEASE

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PROTECTING OUR FARMERS' RIGHT TO FARM

The NSW Nationals in Government will offer even more support for hard working farmers across NSW when it comes to fighting for their legal rights, through the creation of an Agriculture Commissioner.

This new appointment, part of the NSW Nationals' *Standing Up for Farmers* scheme, will work with the Office of the Small Business Commissioner to support farmers, small timber operators and agricultural processors whenever regional 'lawfare' is used to threaten their right to farm.

The Commissioner will also work alongside planning authorities to strengthen standards development and zoning methods and make recommendations to government to ensure our farmers are always protected.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW, John Barilaro said farmers and their communities will benefit significantly from this new support.

"The NSW Nationals know that working in the agriculture sector is tough enough – the regular confrontation of increased regulation, tough seasonal conditions and the growing market power of major corporates," Mr Barilaro said.

"Farmers are the backbone of our regional communities, and when they feel empowered through this additional new support, so will the rest of their community.

"It is important that our farming communities know the NSW Nationals are always ready to back them in when it comes to protecting their livelihood."

Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair said we know NSW farmers are among the best in the world but increased urbanisation means that some of our efficient production practices are now under threat from people who complain loudly about farming noises and smells.

"These complaints could end up in court where well-funded activists use legal tactics to drag out the process, making it unaffordable and unworkable for farmers, agricultural processors, fishers and foresters to do their job," Mr Blair said.

"As our farmers battle one of the worst droughts on record the last thing we want is for them to have to worry about fending off nuisance claims from environmental activists, 'tree change' new neighbours and ad-hoc rule changes by local councils.

"We will be the voice and create the noise for farmers when their rights are being questioned – *we are standing up for farmers.*"

Priority areas for the Agriculture Commissioner will be on issues currently threatening our farmers, including the implementation of the National Dairy Mandatory Code of Conduct and Strategic Action Plan, advocacy in dairy contract negotiations and addressing the recent attack on farmers by the mischievously named *Aussie Farms*.

The Agriculture Commissioner will also work closely with the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to implement the recommendations in the recent review of the NSW Government's Right to Farm Policy.

Farmers have told us they need this support and the NSW Nationals have heard them loud and clear.

The Agricultural Commissioner will be supported with all the necessary legislative or regulatory tools to protect the Right to Farm and the NSW Nationals will work with key stakeholders including NSW Farmers' Association and Local Government NSW, to develop these tools.

NSW Labor's record over the last eight years shows that cannot be trusted to stand up for farmers against their own environmental left wing, as they have opposed each piece of farmer-friendly legislation put through the NSW Parliament, including the Biodiversity Conservation Bill, the Biosecurity Bill and the Crown Lands Management Bill.

Mr Blair said NSW Labor's support for the recommendations of the South Australian Royal Commission is yet another attack on the property rights of farmers.

"Let's be clear - a vote for NSW Labor or a single-issue minor party is a vote for a poorer agriculture sector and a vote to see our farmers' rights destroyed."

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