



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 26 February 2015

CRACKING YEAR AHEAD FOR MACADAMIA FARMERS

NSW Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson and Member for Lismore Thomas George said preparations were well underway for this year's bumper north coast macadamia harvest following a very good season.

Ms Hodgkinson and Mr George made the announcement during a visit to a macadamia farm in McLeans Ridge today.

Ms Hodgkinson said despite a dry start to the season, and recent heavy rains, this year's harvest was looking promising for northern NSW.

"Early predictions are for a great year ahead for north coast macadamia growers who produce about \$70 million worth of nuts," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"The harvest usually runs from February to September with last year being one of the highest ever, producing 43,600 tonnes of nuts nationally.

Thomas George welcomed the good news as a real boost for local growers.

"Approximately half of all macadamia production comes from the northern rivers of NSW..

"The success of the macadamia harvest has strong implications for the region's economy and is great news for the growers," Mr George said.

Crop protection and a dry climate through harvest are the key elements to an increase in yields.

Growers can boost their profits by harvesting macadamia nuts more frequently to ensure good quality product goes to the processors.

"The Department of Primary Industries' (DPI) Entomology Team based in Wollongbar are working with growers to reduce the risks associated with pests such as Sigastus weevil, Fruitspotting bug and lacebug," said Ms Hodgkinson.

"This work is supported by Industry Development Officer, Jeremy Bright who helps local producers to grow their business and gives them capacity to supply new market opportunities."

The DPI has also recently trialled novel new approaches to keeping macadamia trees smaller and therefore more manageable, with promising results.

Ms Hodgkinson said this research delivered on Goal 1 of the NSW Agriculture Industry Action Plan launched last year – to support a responsive and flexible industry.

“This strategic roadmap was developed between industry and the NSW Government and ensures the continued growth of the State’s \$12 billion primary industries sector,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

Australia is the world’s largest producer of macadamias and around 50% of these are grown on the NSW north coast.