

Tara Moriarty

Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Regional New South Wales
Minister for Western New South Wales



Media Release

Construction begins on new \$1.2m pest insects research lab

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*** Images, artist's impressions available [here](#)

The Minns Labor Government has marked another milestone in strengthening biosecurity with enhanced agriculture research capabilities, with construction now underway on a new \$1.2 million state-of-the-art laboratory in Tamworth to combat pest insects.

The purpose-built facility will provide researchers with enhanced capability to investigate insect pests affecting major agricultural sectors such as cotton, grains, horticulture and dairy production.

The Minns Government over the past two years has announced a \$100 million boost to primary industries research including new capital works across the state to modernise how research is undertaken by the state's leading scientists to help farmers now and into the future.

The facility will support the work of Dr Lisa Bird and a team of three highly skilled technicians, whose research will focus on pests that have a high risk for developing resistance including:

- Major caterpillar pests of grain, cotton and horticulture including fall armyworm, corn earworm, cotton bollworm, cluster caterpillar.
- Major spider mite pests of cotton and grains.
- Major leaf feeding insects including aphids, thrips and mirids.

The laboratory will be Australia's leading provider of resistance testing for fall armyworm, a highly destructive pest that threatens grain, horticultural, meat and dairy production systems.

Research conducted at the new laboratory will improve understanding of:

- Insect resistance to agricultural chemicals and cross-resistance with different chemicals
- Pest susceptibility to existing and emerging crop protection products
- Sustainable approaches to integrated pest management
- Emerging resistance risks in major endemic and exotic pest species

These findings help farmers, agronomists and industry make informed decisions about pest control strategies, helping maintain the effectiveness of available management tools while supporting sustainable production systems.

Large-scale surveillance undertaken by researchers at Tamworth helps identify resistance-driven control failures, raise awareness of emerging risks and provide growers with the information needed to implement targeted pest management strategies.

Research outcomes generated through the facility will inform risk assessments for fall armyworm and other emerging pest threats, supporting the development of resistance management strategies that improve industry preparedness and response capability.

The laboratory will provide updated infrastructure, modern equipment and increased operational capacity, enabling researchers to work more efficiently and at greater scale while delivering outcomes that directly benefit growers across NSW and Australia's cropping industries.

This project is part of the more than \$1 billion the Minns Labor Government has invested into biosecurity to protect the state's primary industries now and into the future.

NSW Minister for Agriculture Tara Moriarty said:

"It's great to see construction underway on this new entomology laboratory in Tamworth, which will provide researchers with the modern facilities they need to support our cotton and grain industries into the future.

"Our farmers rely on access to world-class research to remain productive and competitive, and that's why the Minns Government has been delivering significant boosts to capital funding and ensuring all research efforts are focused on industry and state priorities.

"By improving our understanding of pest resistance and control options, this facility will help equip growers with practical information they can use to protect crops and deliver the food our society needs."

NSW DPIRD Entomologist Dr Lisa Bird said:

"Understanding how insect populations respond to different control methods is critical to maintaining the effectiveness of our pest management tools.

"The new facility represents a significant investment in agricultural research capability and will allow us to build on our work to better understand insect resistance and sustainable pest management for our farmers."

MEDIA: Alastair Walton | Minister Moriarty | 0418 251 229