Donations flood in

By Emily McInerney

Four tonnes of pet food is expected to come to the city and beyond to help graziers feed their pets and working dogs.

Maria Arnold, owner of Perfect Pets, said she wanted to help farmers in need for two reasons.

"We may be in the city but so many of us really feel for what the farming communities are going through, "Ms Arnold said.

"When every resource is stretched to the limit, supporting them with food for their pets is just one small way we can help.

"I've heard that a lot of farmers are being forced to surrender their dogs because they can't afford to feed them.

"When farmers have four or five working dogs and they've had to let go of all their livestock, their options for keeping their dogs are limited.

"I'm told this help with food could literally be a life saver for some dogs."

Ms Arnold has a strong connection with the bush.

"I also know all of these beautiful places," she said. "My father is from Tamworth and loves the bush.

"When I was growing up we spent school holidays travelling and camping in Western NSW and along the rivers that have now dried up.

"I remember going to Broken Menindee, Bourke, Wilcannia, Walgett, even as far as Tibooburra.

"Dad used to say; 'I need to get out to the flat country'.

"It breaks my heart what's hap-

pening right now." Ms Arnold said it's not just dog food that they would be distributing but also chook feed, bird seed and cat food.

"The food is donated through the PetBarn Foundation and we



Diesel the three-legged heeler with Kora the Collie and Diesel and Dust the Kelpies in the dry riverbed of the Darling River at **Tolarno Station.** PICTURE: Mel Williams-Brown

help with logistics and distribution.

"We have an already established partnership with Petbarn that supports shelter and rescue groups and this initiative to help farmers is an extension of that."

She said there is four tonnes of food coming to the region.

"The four tonnes picked up on Wednesday is making its way through the Flinders Ranges.

"We're expecting it to get to

Broken Hill and Menindee this month.

"Distribution is being taken care of by Mal Highet, who is heading up 'Visit a Farmer' and the Menindee Water Run.

"I've been working with Mal, and Tolarno Station's Rob McBride for a couple of months.

"We're really pleased to be getting this first batch of food out to the farmers and their animals.

"We plan for more in December,

and hopefully into next year as well if needed.'

The Perfect Pets website is an Australia-wide free platform that provides pet lovers with the information and support services they need to care for their pets.

Perfect Pets is a contribution based, profit-for-purpose enter-

Fifty per cent of their annual profits go to helping support animal welfare initiatives, rescue groups, and wildlife conservation.

VALUED AT \$1500

"I know our Perfect Pets community are behind us all the way on this," said Ms Arnold.

"We're also hoping that when more people hear about it, they will connect with our farmers and the huge challenges they face. One way of doing that is to unite on our love of animals."

Anyone wanting to help or contribute can contact Maria Arnold on info@perfectpets.com.au, or visit the website www.perfectpets.

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