

Making Headlines:

Word from the Chair

ACC support of tree crops

Caring for our Country Programs

ACC tree crop field days

Tree crops and fire insurance

Nordic family forestry



Edition 9

Winter 2009

FOCUS ON A TREE FARMER

Les McTaggart - Sandalwood grower and Peer Mentor

The McTaggart family live on a 160 acre 'home block' property west of Koorda in the Western Australian Wheatbelt, receiving an average annual rainfall of 300mm. The original, larger farm was settled by Les's grandfather in the depression in the early 1930's. The area now under sandalwood is considered to be '15 bag wheat country'.

Les started experimenting in the late 1990s by planting sandalwood nuts on remnant jam trees (*Acacia acuminata*). As he learnt more about sandalwood and his enthusiasm grew, he started a regime of putting in a plantation each year starting in 2001. By 2003 Les reckons that he 'had learnt how to do it' successfully for his farm.

Les feels that the success of his plantations is due to good weed control prior to planting and in the first year. Once the seedlings get away, he feels that the weeds are no longer a threat to the trees' survival. It is important to assess the carrying capacity of each site so there is no absolute formula to plantation design. Depending on the soils he is planting in, Les leaves 2.5m to 3m between each row, planting 1,000 stems per hectare, hoping that at least 800 survive to maturity and with an aim of establishing 40% of the site to sandalwood.

A good variety of host species is important as is planting host species which are accustomed to the soils and rainfall of any particular area. With four different soil types on his small block alone, Les plants a variety of hosts and mixes them in each row.

Les plants his sandalwood nuts about 30cm away from the host on the north or west side of the host plant 'where the rains come from'. He plants the untreated nuts about 5cm deep with a modified shovel using only one seed per host. He goes back over his whole plantation every year for five years replanting nuts where there has been no germination.

Les currently has 32 hectares of sandalwood plantation and plans to keep planting for the foreseeable future. He is one of the Australian Sandalwood Network's (ASN) Peer Mentors funded by the University of Melbourne's Master TreeGrower Program. Sandalwood Peer Mentors are available to ASN members starting out on their growing sandalwood adventure and wanting to bounce ideas off other enthusiasts. Peer Mentors are paid for their time (up to 3 hours per ASN member) by the Peer Mentoring Program. If you are interested in talking with a Peer Mentor, contact AVONGRO.

AVONGRO T. 08 9291 8249 www.avongro.com.au E. mdurcan@iinet.net.au

W E S T E R N A U S T R A L I A

A Word from the Chairman

Welcome to this ninth edition of the AVONGRO newsletter.

AVONGRO has had some difficulties to face this year. As regular readers would be aware, our biggest risk to survival was the discontinuation of funding for Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDCs) by the Federal Government. AVONGRO has been able to continue, albeit with reduced hours per week for our Executive Officer (EO), by having gained some contracts and projects, including the current Caring for Our Country project. However it does detract from the way the PFDCs were originally run, with each PFDC tailoring their work needs to their region's needs, with the security of being able to concentrate on getting stuff on the ground. The EO's task has changed, with a new emphasis on writing funding applications, as opposed to on ground works.

AVONGRO does have in progress a project aimed at partnering the delivery of a brushwood panel manufacturing plant in the Avon region, along with a mechanical system for the harvesting of brushwood. It is hoped that this project will have made considerable progress before summer 2009. These innovations in the Avon region will give us first bite at the cherry when it comes to growing Brushwood (Broombush) as a viable deep rooted woody perennial tree cropping operation. More details later!

At this point, I would like to thank Avon Catchment Council for sponsoring the AVONGRO Newsletter, and also for their ongoing support, and opportunities for AVONGRO to partner them in the delivery of various projects. An effective working relationship between the two groups is good for NRM and the community, and for seeing that duplication doesn't squander scarce resources.

Ian Hall
AVONGRO Chairman

Kim Brooksbank of the Department of Agriculture and Food WA has set up a blog to act as a discussion forum regarding the future of Western Australia's Private Forestry Development Committees. Please log onto this site and have your say as to what role you would like PFDCs to play.

<http://waawg-pfdc.blogspot.com>

Disclaimer

The information provided in this newsletter has been collated from the best available information at the time of writing. Please check with a reputable revegetation advisor prior to making any decisions based on the information presented here.

'A sustainable commercial tree crops industry integrated with existing regional land use systems which enhances the social and environmental benefits for the Avon River Basin.'

Avon Catchment Council - Supporting Tree Crops in the Avon

by Dan Ferguson, Program Manager – Sustainable Agriculture (9690 2259 or daniel.ferguson@agric.wa.gov.au)

While the Avon Catchment Council (ACC) wraps up the Natural Heritage Trust and National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality phase of investment, it is starting to plan and deliver projects supported by the Australian Government 'Caring for our Country 2009-13' (CfoC) programme.

Each of the fifty-six regional natural resource management (NRM) organisations across Australia now aims to achieve targets specified for each region in annual CfoC business plans. The Avon River Basin is considered a priority area mainly for improving land management practices to reduce wind erosion risk and to increase the area of land under the National Reserve System. To achieve these and other targets the ACC is allocated a base-level funding amount of \$3.9 million per year. The ACC also submitted two medium-scale (\$1-3 M / year) projects into a competitive CfoC funding process that was open to any qualified organisation.

A strategic objective of the ACC in developing submissions was to ensure that those local and regional stakeholder groups that have demonstrated effectiveness in creating NRM practice change were identified as prospective partners during the next four years. AVONGRO is considered a 'key partner' in a base-level funding proposal due to their past achievements in supporting land managers to integrate trees appropriately into landscapes and agricultural systems, which is one of several recommended management practices to meet targets for managing wind erosion.

Applications are now being assessed by the Australian Government for projects to be undertaken during 2009-10.



Wind erosion is a major target of the Federal Government's new Caring for our Country Program. A combination of solutions can be applied to collectively address this issue.

Caring for our Country Project:

Tom Sweeny of the Department of Agriculture and Food WA has been working with AVONGRO as a project Team member. As part of his list of tasks, Tom has reviewed over 35 publications, journals and articles to compile some base-line information and has written a summary:

'The technical and economic interaction between planted trees and conventional agricultural enterprises'

This paper will be on the AVONGRO website on the project update page:

<http://www.avongro.com.au/Webpages/CfoC.htm>

Update - 2009 Caring for our Country Project

Identifying triggers and impediments to tree cropping

by Monica Durcan (9291 8249 or mdurcan@iinet.net.au)

On March 9th key farmers, consultants and Natural Resource Management Officers were invited to a facilitated workshop guided by Sue Middleton of GrassRoots Developments. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- introduce participants to the project and what it planned to achieve;
- gather their thoughts as to impediments to and trigger for the adoption of tree crops as part of farming systems;
- gain commitment to be the focus group for the project and engage their continued involvement.

An excellent turnout was achieved with over 30 people attending, all expressing an interest in continuing involvement in the project. We are calling this the 'reference group' for this project.

The key **impediments** identified by the group were:

- no certainty in marketing avenues and price in the future;
- no information on projected growth and profit (cost vs returns);
- attitude of farm consultants;
- short term research projects;
- annual vs tree crops;
- loss of community members eg shearers, stock agents etc;
- insurance (fire, cost of insurance);
- labour inputs shortage and can't use traditional machines;
- dissatisfaction with current industry development (no market or harvester); and
- lack of industry confidence.



AVONGRO Caring for our Country Team members feel that many of these are misconceptions that can be addressed and have been discussing ideas with reference group members.

Triggers identified by the group included:

- dissatisfaction with current (annual agricultural) profitability;
- other people planting trees eg catchment group;
- active local groups – lcdc's, catchment groups;
- helpful wife re planting trees;
- personal like for tree planting;
- subsidies;
- incentives – seedling and or fencing;
- grant/opportunity;
- demonstrated profitability;
- superannuation and tax incentives;
- location and land values – (note this can also be an impediment) – land values, yields, rainfall, might trigger landowner to diversify;
- use of unproductive land;
- fun;
- no till example;
- social viability;
- tipping point – when returns > agricultural lease value;
- declining profit from traditional crops;
- changing benefits – salinity, carbon, wind erosion;
- perceived threats with conventional agriculture costs;
- markets for sandalwood and brushwood;
- drought proofing your farm;
- intrinsic values – a caring attitude for the environment; and
- environmental – salinity, wind erosion, biodiversity etc – industry development also.



Predicting tree growth, carbon balance and water use in the Avon

by Don White, Jenny Carter and Tammi Short of CSIRO

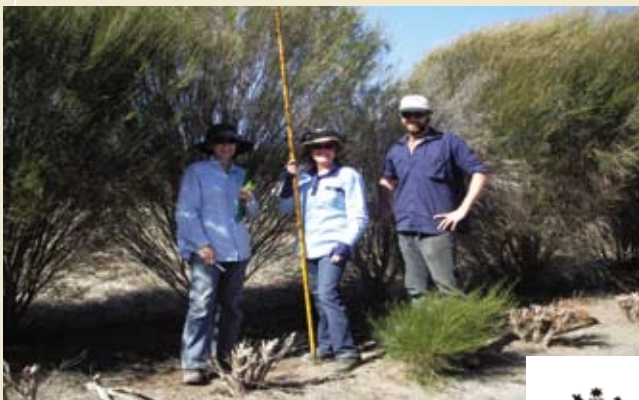
Since January CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems have been collaborating with AVONGRO on a large project with funding from the Federal Government through the Caring for our Country program. One of the major impediments to adoption of trees is uncertainty about growth rates, carbon balance and other values of trees including changes to hydrology and biodiversity. Our aim is to reduce this uncertainty by undertaking some targeted measurement and combining this with existing knowledge to build a web based tool for quantifying the growth, carbon and water balance and biodiversity outcomes of tree planting for large parts of the Avon catchment.

Our first task is to calibrate our models of tree growth, carbon sequestration and water use for local species and conditions. This is by far the most important part of the project as we must make every effort to reduce uncertainty associated with these predictions.

With the help of Helen Job (Brushwood Growers), Bethan Lloyd (Australian Sandalwood Network) and Tim Emmott (Oil Mallee Association) we selected sites to cover the range of climatic conditions, soil types and stand age of oil mallees, sandalwood and brushwood plantings in the region. Measurements got under way on May the 4th and will continue until mid June. A team that includes John Larmour (CSIRO, Canberra), Dwayne Durcan (Landcare Promotions) and Tristan Job are measuring trees in three plots established at each site and collecting soils using a drill rig and plastic push coring system. We are focussing our measurements on Sandalwood and Brushwood as we already have access to a good oil mallee data set through John Bartle at the Department of Environment and Conservation. In June and July we will visit a small number of sites to destructively sample trees. We will use this data to establish relationships between biomass and the simple measured growth collected at other sites.

Although our focus is on productivity we couldn't resist the opportunity to make some physiological measurements on the parasitic Sandalwood and one of the hosts. Just before dawn on March 9th, we collected shoots from sandalwood and jam trees at Bert and Norma Wansborough's place near Beverley. We took the shoots back to River Cottage on Avon Terrace where we repeatedly measured their water status as they dried out over more than 24 hours. These measurements tell us about the way plants will respond to drought and the level of water stress they can endure and still continue to function. Since 1991 we have made similar measurements on species range from environments spanning Australia from the wet forests of Victoria to the dry eastern fringe of the wheat belt. This data has provided important insights into the way Australian tree species cope with drought.

For all of our work the generosity and knowledge of farmers, local agency staff and representatives of local grower groups has been invaluable. We appreciate it and do not take it for granted.



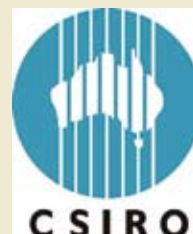
Field data collection team:
Dr Jenny Carter (CSIRO),
Tammi Short (CSIRO)
Dwayne Durcan (Landcare Promotions)



To follow progress, visit the project website regularly
<http://www.avongro.com.au/Webpages/CfoC.htm>



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



2009 Field Day Series - Tree Crops and NRM

Oil Mallee Field Day, February 26th

by David McFall, Upper Great Southern Oil Mallee Growers Association (0429 815 373
or templemc@treko.net.au)

32 attendees attended the day. The focus of the day was to present new mallee industry information and developments and highlight the NRM benefits of integrated mallee plantings.

The program featured a short presentation from the key note speaker and regional representatives followed by a extensive field visit and exchange of technical and practical experience 'in the field'. The format worked well and enabled a good exchange of ideas, information sharing and discussion on the day.

Comments:

"Learn more about bio-char"

– "yes it did meet my expectations"

"New knowledge, expanded networks"

– "Quite good, it was at high level and open as opposed to prescriptive advice"

"Another set of elements to add to the collected information on soil rehabilitation/ improvement"



Australian Sandalwood Network Field Day, March 14th

by Bethan Lloyd, Executive Assistant (9574 5882 or exec@sandalwood.org.au)

The focus of the field day was on the natural resource management (NRM) benefits of establishing sandalwood plantations as well as looking at the issue of sandalwood and host seeds. Many sandalwood growers are now starting to produce sandalwood and host seeds and are asking the question. 'What do I do now??' The after lunch field trip visited two established sites near Koorda for a firsthand look at how different land managers addressed establishment issues.

Key Speakers were:

- **Andrew Lang** (SMARTimbers Victoria and Churchill Fellow) – Producers working together to market their products, studies from around the world.
- **Geoff Woodall** (Centre of Excellence in NRM) - Plantation establishment, natural resource management benefits, establishment of sandalwood by direct seeding.
- **Anne Cochrane** (Department of Environment and Conservation) - host seeds; a look at Acacias, Hakeas, Grevilleas and issues around other species used as hosts.
- **Bernard Maclean** (Landcare Services) - Sandalwood seed; issues around collection, storage and selling



2009 Field Day Series - Tree Crops and NRM

Introduction to Farm Forestry Roadshow, March 12th to 14th

by Monica Durcan (9291 8249 or mdurcan@iinet.net.au)

The Forest Products Commission (FPC) received funding from the Avon Catchment Council through their Caring for our Country funded Integrating Trees Into Sustainable Agriculture (ITSA) Program to run an Introduction to Farm Forestry Course by March 2009. FPC worked closely with AVONGRO Wheatbelt Tree Cropping to deliver this program. It so happened that the Australian Sandalwood Network (also funded through the ITSA project) and the Oil Mallee Association (with other Caring for our Country funding) also planned to hold field days around the same time and in the same district of the Avon. As these tree crops were to be a major part of the Roadshow it was agreed to combine the events.

Rowan Reid of the University of Melbourne's Master TreeGrower Program and Andrew Lang of SMARTimbers Victoria attended the full three days and provided invaluable insights to national and international tree cropping and bioenergy issues. Rowan's attendance was funded by the University of Melbourne. Andrew's attendance was sponsored by NEWROC and WEROC.

16 people attended the entire event with approximately 20 in total attending the Oil Mallee field day and 55 the Australian Sandalwood Network field day.

The Roadshow was held from the 12th to the 14th of March 2009:

- Thursday March 12th – General introductions, economics, farm forestry principles, site assessments, introduction to cooperatives
- Friday March 13th – Oil Mallee Association field day and Brushwood information update
- Saturday March 14th – Australian Sandalwood Network field day



Brushwood Field Day, March 26th

by Helen Job, Avon Brushwood Coordinator (0427 387 980 or brushwood@iinet.net.au)

A brushwood field day was held on March 26th, 2009 at Kononngorring Hall, Kononngorring. The field day was sponsored by the Avon Catchment Council.

A variety of topics were covered by the presenters in the morning session and included:

- Revegetation of the riparian zones in the landscape – importance and impact of the *Melaleuca artriviridius* and *Melaleuca scalena* in the vegetation. In some areas depending on the water quality, wind erosion and soil condition the placement location is different to revegetate the site.
- A report on the work being carried out with the spike rush and progress results
- Eco systems are important to the cycle of agriculture practices. A mono culture brings an imbalance to the system. This could result in an imbalance of insects and pests.
- Brushwood stands provides habitat to many species – eg wasps, ants, birds, bees etc and an explanation was given as to what some species feed on in their own food chain
- Information was shown on where to find natural stands of brushwood species
- An update on the industry trials carried out by SA interests in WA plus the results
- Explanation on designs of plantings, the value of brushwood in controlling wind and water erosion plus a guide to identify the *Melaleucas* created by Margaret Byrne.

In conclusion brushwood has many uses in our agricultural land system. The natural resource management values it brings to the land are many and varied depending on the site. The field trip undertaken to a site nearby was extremely interesting. The farmer was present to explain why areas were planted and the results could be observed. Stands of brush were visited that displayed selection of provenances, re-growth after harvest and establishment design.



Tree Crops and Fire Insurance

by Tom Sweeny, Department of Agriculture and Food WA and AVONGRO Caring for our Country Team Member (9622 2154 or thomas.sweeny@agric.wa.gov.au)

Those who have an interest in farm forestry can take heart that insurance is available to cover them against fire. This is one of the frequently asked questions by those contemplating a move into farm forestry and was raised as an impediment, at the meeting in March, as part of the Caring for our Country project (see page 4 of this newsletter), which explored attitudes to planting tree crops.

However there are only a limited number of companies who offer this service and as with other insurance measures taken in life, there are rewards offered if one is loyal and continues a policy over a number of years. It is also important to point out that to get insurance with a company, one may have to first negotiate with a broker.

In looking through the possible insurers, the following information was obtained;

- Private planting for farm forestry is covered by the policies.
- For the purpose of insurance, oil mallees, sandalwood and brushwood are referred to as 'hardwood' species.
- Fire, lightning, hail, windstorm, cyclone and aircraft damage are all covered.
- The value insured is the agreed value, which is determined at the time the cover is placed. This is also known as the net present day value. Valuations can be listed as either high, medium or low, depending on the site productivity, available markets and initial costs. Owners are asked for reasons for their selection of a category.
- Discounts are available for both no claim bonuses and continuity of policy, that can amount to up to 42% of the premium.
- Extension to policies that cover public liability are possible.
- Some policies offer a reduced cost, by insuring 'net of salvage' or by allowing for replanting only.
- All policies have an excess.

Currently premiums cost approximately 1% of the plantation value per year. Along with purchasing a fire insurance policy, it is also suggested that the following efforts will be rewarded as far as safeguarding against the likelihood of fire; firebreaks, grass control, good water supplies, access, burn-offs and good neighbourly relations.

Other aspects of fires that may be of interest are;

- Most plantation fires start elsewhere and burn into a plantation.
- Once established, a plantation fire spreads at a slower pace than a grass fire under similar conditions
- Fires spread more quickly uphill than along a flat or downhill.
- Fuel – as provided by needles, leaves, twigs, shrubs, weeds, bark, branches and trunks – is a key ingredient in fire behaviour
- It is strongly recommended that landowners have a 'fire risk management plan'. This will include a physical plan of the trees showing access tracks, water-points, turning areas, fuel reduced areas and safe areas.

See also the Australian Forest Growers' website:
<http://www.afg.asn.au/services/insurance.html>

WEROC/NEWROC Caring for our Country Project Update

by Kara Hatch, Natural Resource Management Officer, Shire of Westonia and Yilgarn
(0427 467 077 or clc@westonia.wa.gov.au)

The Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils (WEROC) is an organisation consisting of five Local Government Authorities: Shire of Bruce Rock, Shire of Kellerberrin, Shire of Merredin, Shire of Tammin and Shire of Westonia. North Eastern Wheatbelt Regional Organisation of Councils (NEWROC) is an organisation consisting of six Local Government Authorities; Shire of Koorda, Shire of Nungarin, Shire of Mt Marshall, Shire of Mukinbudin, Shire of Trayning, and Shire of Wyalkatchem. Both WEROC and NEWROC NRMOs are working together for the coordinated delivery of Natural Resource Management (NRM) in the region.

WEROC NRM in partnership with NEWROC NRM was successful in receiving funding from the Federal Government through the Caring for Our Country funding program to undertake adoptive Innovative Practices to Improve the Resilience of Farming Systems in the Northern and Eastern Wheatbelt of Western Australia (across the 11 WEROC & NEWROC Shires).

The project will plant 700,000 seedlings of 5 economic perennial plant options (Brushwood, Sandalwood hosts, Casuarina obesa, Saltbush and Oil Mallees) across our landscape and assist in the establishment of over 400 ha of Lucerne. Three local nurseries are growing the 700,000 seedlings which are required for this project.

Projects such as these are essential in delivering NRM objectives in the North Eastern and Eastern wheatbelt regions. With a growing demand from landholders for trees, bodies such as the WEROC NEWROC NRM Group are essential in their ability to successfully deliver projects through their networks with landholders.

Western Australia is one of the largest wheat agricultural regions in the world, yet is bound to be one of the areas most affected by climate change. Planting economically viable perennial systems within already existing farming systems is one approach which is endorsed by the WEROC NEWROC NRM Group as an option for developing resilient farming systems.

With 55 landholders across nine local government authorities, this project is bound to make its mark in Natural Resource Management. It is hoped that many more projects such as this will be developed in the future, allowing landholders across the WEROC and NEWROC regions to continue to develop resilient and sustainable farming systems, thereby ensuring that their land is viable for the next generation and beyond.

Members of the NEWROC WEROC NRM Group being shown project seedlings by Dustin and Lisa McCreery from Chatfields Nursery. L to R- Samantha Pickering (Trayning and Nungarin), Tracey Hobbs (Mukinbudin), Rosie Bogle (Koorda and Wyalkatchem), Lisa McCreery (Chatfields), Kara Hatch (Westonia and Yilgarn), Brad Thompson (Kellerberrin) and Dustin McCreery (Chatfields). Absent- Sally Rayner (Bruce Rock), Tobias Vudzijena (Merredin).



Nordic family forestry associations: structure, manage

Andrew Lang sends AVONGRO very interesting information on a regular basis. Andrew came to Western Australia as a key presenter at the Introduction to Farm Forestry Roadshow in March and gave valuable insights into the work SMARTtimbers is doing. He is a leading expert in cooperatives but also provides us with valuable updates on the international developments in creating bioenergy from woody perennials.

(andrewlang@smarttimbers.com.au)



Report 16 Andrew Lang Gottstein Fellowship Study Trip 2008

Summary

The present important place that family forestry occupies in the regional and national economies of the Nordic countries is directly linked to the way it has been encouraged and supported by legislation to be self-administering, and to the way that the grower associations have used their growing economic power to reinvest in and strengthen the industry. One proof of the success of this form of ownership of the forest resource is that businesses spun off by two national forest owner associations since the 1960s are now among the largest in the world. These are Norske Skog out of Norway and Metsaliitto out of Finland. This general topic has been touched on in some short reports from my 2008 Gottstein Fellowship trip, in my Churchill Fellowship report 2003, and in reports of other trips of 2005 and 2006, as well as various conference papers (all these are on the SMARTtimbers website www.smarttimbers.com.au). I hold that adoption of some crucial aspects of this Nordic family forest management is critical to realising the potential development of non-industrial forestry (NIPF) in Australia. Specifically these aspects are –

- how the forest resource is owned;
- how the owners combine to market timber, provide extension and oversee sustainable management; and
- how the associations lobby, influence policy, advise on research priorities and otherwise interact with government.

It is self evident that it is the owners of the forest resource who have the real and ongoing interest in its sustainable management and in its return to investment. Their interest is far more involved, robust and enduring than that of industry or of government officers. The Nordic approach works because it uses this as the foundation of the long term strategy of forest management. Since the growers and the associations they control are at the core of the industry, and the forestry production underpins many other sectors of industry, they are well placed to provide feedback and advice to government and industry. There is not the disconnect we constantly see in Australia, where policy is developed and research prioritised without any direct input from growers. Administration here is mainly one way down from the top.

Industry and growers have lost confidence in long term policies and direction. Here is how it works in the Nordic countries. In Finland the individuals and families owning the 440,000 forest holdings (mostly under 20ha, but together the source of about 86% of Finland's industrial roundwood, or about 40 million m³/yr) are represented by the their 330 (?) local and 19 regional grower associations through elected board representation at the Central Union of Farmers and Forest Owners. This central body employs forestry specialists and lobbyists. In Sweden the owners of the over 330,000 family forest holdings are represented both by the six cooperatives that provide services for about half of all NIPF owners, and also by Skogssärgarna – the Swedish Federation of Forest Owners.

In Norway the NIPF structures are similar to Sweden's. Denmark's system has regional forest owner associations, and a central body that has the task of coordination and lobbying and helps unite three forest owner groups – small growers, large growers and government, and Christmas tree growers.

The NIPF associations of these four countries have a number of important similarities.

- They replace partly or totally many of the activities of government and do them more efficiently and economically. These include provision of extension and training for growers.
- They lobby government and provide input to policy development.
- They assist with compliance with EU and national regulations, and provide a service that deals with much of the paperwork.
- They perform essential planning, mapping and certification work.
- They oversee harvesting and act for absentee owners.
- They assist with or perform marketing, and advise on valuation.
- They monitor pest animal numbers, water quality, and heritage and environmental sites, and liaise with other authorities.
- They keep accurate information on yields, and on volumes available for harvest over the coming decade of various products.
- They are involved in developing new systems and approaches for cost effective harvest or handling, and contribute to general research.
- They help to make any harvest, processing or planting more efficient through aggregating sites in any area in a rational work sequence.

A number of things are essential precursors for such an integrated and productive system of grower administered NIPF industry. There needs to be:

1. a threshold size of forestry estate in any area that would supply enough product to pay for the association, or other sources of funding;
2. an adequate number of growers prepared to be involved in the association;
3. a market for the various lines of product from the local estate;
4. individuals with the expertise to manage the association, develop markets, provide training and oversee harvests etc.
5. governments prepared to support these developing organisations, and divest the tasks of extension, training, mapping etc. to them.

The outcomes of our adoption of central Nordic principles of NIPF management would be a significantly more profitable, more sustainable and more coherently managed NIPF estate here. It could result in up to 5 million hectares of integrated farm forestry across Australia, tens of thousands of new jobs, more prosperity in rural and remote areas, replacement of imports, improved habitat, sustainable yields and minimal impact on catchment flows. Other benefits would include significant sequestered carbon, and millions of tonnes of biomass for production of baseload carbon neutral energy. Lastly, with application of the best principles of design and placement, it would mean more farm productivity and reduced surface evaporation, allowing more useable rainfall for pastures and crops. It would help farmers reduce risk and substantially offset GHG emissions from their own and other enterprises.

Results of newsletter survey

With our last newsletter, we sent out a survey to assess if the AVONGRO newsletter is meeting the mark, whether readers find it useful and to canvass for other ideas for articles. We had an excellent return of about 10%. Many thanks to those of you who took the time to complete and return the form.

Question	% Response
Read it right away	58.5
Put it away to read later but never really get to it	17.1
Read the parts that interest me/us	31.7
Put it in the bin	2.4
Find the topics interesting and useful	48.8
Feel the information keeps us informed	68.3
Feel more confident about integrating tree crops	7.3
Find the whole newsletter a waste of time and paper	2.4
Length of articles too long	4.9
Length of articles too short	2.4
Length of articles mostly just right	82.9
Newsletter too long	14.6
Newsletter too short	4.9
Newsletter mostly just right	78
The full colour makes it more interesting and easy to read	87.8
Full colour is a waste	12.2
Content a bit superficial, would like more scientific data	26.8
Content just right, inspires me/us to investigate further	61

Some excellent ideas were put forward for improvements and topics that could be included, hopefully we have addressed some of them here. Remember that back issues can be found on the AVONGRO website: www.avongro.com.au

AVONGRO Associates:

Avon Catchment Council
Tel. Natarsha Woods 9690 2250
www.avonnm.org.au

Forest Products Commission
Tel. Mike Carter 9302 7488
www.fpc.wa.gov.au

Department of Environment and Conservation
Tel. 9219 8000
www.dec.wa.gov.au
www.calm.wa.gov.au

Department of Agriculture and Food
Tel. Mr Kim Brooksbank 9892 8444
www.agric.wa.gov.au

Oil Mallee Association
Tel. Mike Kerkmans 9961 1242
www.oilmallee.org.au

State PFDC Liaison Officer
Tel. Richard Moore 9780 6100
www.fpc.wa.gov.au

Australian Sandalwood Network
Tel. Bethan Lloyd 9574 5882
www.sandalwood.org.au

Acknowledgements

This project is initiated by the Avon Catchment Council with funding by the Australian Government and the Government of Western Australia.

Photos courtesy of Andrew Lang, Tom Sweeny, WEROC/NEWROC and Monica Durcan



Australian Government

