

Hunter Farm Forestry Network – Farming Trees Fact Sheet

Farming Trees - potential for diversification on private land

Trees, existing or planted, but managed sustainably, can be a valuable and potentially profitable enhancement of any farming or forestry enterprise on private land. They may take the form of a farm forest, a plantation forest or a private native forest. A private farming property may incorporate any of these forest forms within the property.

Farm forestry

Farm forestry (also sometimes referred to as Agroforestry) involves the integration of trees into agriculture and primary production on a farm, usually planted as shelter belts, small clumps or woodlots, to produce forest products or to benefit farm productivity and sustainability. There are varying definitions of farm forestry and agroforestry but a common theme is that it is a system of sustainable land management that involves the integration of forestry and agriculture or grazing activity on the same land unit -

http://www.farmforestline.com.au/pages/1.1_what.html.

Put simply, farm forestry or agroforestry is using trees on farms. It is the result of a farmer's decision to practice forestry.

Potential production benefits include:

- sale of timber and other forest products;
- materials for farm infrastructure (fences, yards, buildings), shade and shelter, additional fodder, lowered water tables reducing salinity, reduced wind speed and evaporation and fewer pests by maintaining beneficial predators;
- returns from marginal areas like laneways, riparian areas, steep areas and areas with soil erosion, or problem soils;
- buffers between neighbours and intensive agriculture able to be carried out with less conflict;
- use of effluent from intensive livestock enterprises.

Trees on farms help maintain biodiversity and provide wildlife corridors. They also have aesthetic value, increasing property value and providing a more pleasant place to live and work. Tree crops also are more flexible in the timing of work, using farm resources more effectively throughout the year.

Plantation Forestry

Plantation forestry is the establishment of planted trees on cleared land that are managed to provide commercial timber products (which may be either selectively harvested or clear-felled) or for environment protection, including by reducing salinity or for carbon sequestration/trading.

Plantation forestry in NSW is regulated by the *Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999*, and the *Plantations and Reafforestation (Code) Regulation 2001*. This legislation only applies to trees or shrubs planted on essentially cleared land for timber production or environment protection but not principally for food production or any other farm produce (other than timber). A natural (native) forest area is not a 'plantation' under this legislation. A forest plantation within an existing private farming property may be authorised, but is not required to be authorised, if the plantation area is less than 30ha (exempt farm forestry). Plantations greater in area than 30ha must be authorised.

Private Native Forestry

Private native forestry (PNF) is the sustainable management and harvesting of native forests on private property.

In NSW Private Native Forestry is regulated under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*, the *Native Vegetation Regulation 2013* and the *Private Native Forestry Code of Practice* (normally through the establishment of a 'property vegetation plan' – PNF PVP). In the Hunter region any clearing or logging of native forest (including any area of remnant native forest on an existing farming property), which is not native forest regrowth after 1990 is subject to this legislation.

For further information on the legislative framework and relevant legislation for private forestry see the NSW EDO (Environmental Defenders Office) 'Forestry' Fact Sheet:

www.edonsw.org.au/forestry_clearing_vegetation_trees

For further information on successful examples of agroforestry and permaculture forestry see the Permaculture Research Institute website:-

Bambra Agroforestry Farm (Ottways, Victoria):

<http://permaculturenews.org/2014/06/26/bambra-agroforestry-farm-victoria-australia/>

Dalpura Farm (Geelong, Victoria) – Experiments in Permaculture Forestry:

<http://permaculturenews.org/2009/11/09/dalpura-farm-experiments-in-permaculture-forestry/>

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