

Search Criteria

Model	Model C: Technological Development
Industry	Forestry
Focus/Level	Industry
Purpose	Testing available knowledge Creating knowledge
Outcomes	Development of a management practice
Special Interest Groups	Other
Design and Implementation	Designed and managed by researchers/experts

1. Project Title:

FFORNE (Farm Forestry North East) Project

2. Funders:

Victorian Government (NRE) initiative, funded \$2.8 million between 1996,1997 &1998, and landholders contributed \$500 to \$700 per hectare to establishment. Ongoing management has been undertaken by landholders at an estimated cost of \$4 million.

3. Providers:

Dept primary Industries

4. Key Contacts:

Philippa Noble, DPI, Private Forestry Officer, Wangaratta
Kevin Ritchie, DSE, NE Regional Manager, Benalla

5. Industry/Issue/Geography:

The project was to initiate the development of a self-sustaining farm/private land based hardwood sawlog industry in north east/north central Victoria.

6. Project Context:

The project was inspired by a trip to Western Australia of members of north eastern Victorian landcare groups. They saw farm forestry in action there and came back to lobby for government support to assist landholders to get involved in farm forestry here. In Victoria the hardwood sawlog industry has historically been based on native forest harvesting. This project was to initiate the development of a hardwood sawlog plantation industry to contribute to the supply of hardwood sawlogs as the native forest supply has been reduced due to the formation of parks and the introduction of regional forest agreements.

7. Project Niche (Specific Objectives):

The project aimed to establish 700 ha/yr of eucalypt plantation managed for sawlog production, on farms in NE Victoria

8. Philosophy/Approach:

Initially a consultant was engaged to identify options to establish these plantations. Landholder contribution was seen as important for the long-term success of the project, but lack of landholder knowledge on plantation growing and time to implement works, were acknowledged as needing to be addressed by the project.

Therefore the project was developed as a cost share arrangement, with the landholder providing land and funding of \$700/ha, and the department providing knowledge and technical works.

9. Resources, Management and Staffing Structures:

Four permanent staff were engaged by the project for the duration, with an extra 2.5 staff in years 2 & 3 of the project.

Staff included a project manager, a contractor manager, site inspection and site analysis role, project marketer/landholder liaison and administration/land title registration.

10. Process/Methods Used:

The project undertook initial research to develop project details, and managed the implementation of the project and project works. They undertook marketing of the project to landholders to obtain interested investment, site inspections, mapping, development of landholder agreements and contractor agreements, registered agreement on title, and management of contractors to undertake plantation site preparation, seedling supply, planting and plantation management for 2 years.

11. Impacts to date (and evaluation approaches used):

The main impact of the project was the establishment of 1600 ha of eucalypt sawlog plantations in blocks of over 10 ha throughout the North East of Victoria. 120 landholders were involved in the project and the FFORNE Hardwood growers co-operative was initiated.

A grower's survey was undertaken in 1999 after the 3-year incentive scheme concluded. It revealed that participants in the scheme were satisfied with their involvement in the scheme, with 26% intending to continue hardwood sawlog establishment and 56% indicating they would expand their plantations if further similar government support were available.

The scheme has had many other flow-on effects. Being some of the first large scale hardwood plantations in the state, the FFORNE plantations have been the location for a number of research trials, such as:

- the affect of plantations on biodiversity with Charles Sturt Uni and Arthur Rylah Institute

- the development of data for growth modeling of plantation eucalypts in different soils and climates with the Centre for Forest Tree Technology (CFTT) and Melbourne University,
- treatment of coppice regrowth and chemical thinning,
- identification of boron deficiency in NE plantations with CFTT
- sawn timber recovery of plantation grown timber in sawmill trials with CSIRO
- tension wood occurrence with CSIRO
- fertiliser requirements for older eucalypt plantation with Melbourne University
- post preservation potential of your eucalypts with CSIRO

Other flow –on effects of the project include the;

- development of pruning and thinning guidelines for growers and contractors
- publication of a video on pruning and thinning
- development of new businesses involved in pruning and thinning contracting
- development of a pruning harness and safer working conditions
- increased awareness of the community to the potential of plantations for sawlogs in their landscape

12. Effectiveness:

The project has been highly effective in increasing awareness of the community in plantation sawlog growing, and developing an initial sawlog timber resource. Many of the questions and uncertainties relating to establishment, management and sawing of plantation grown sawlogs have now been addressed.

The project has been less effective as an incentive to get the community to continue to invest in sawlog plantation establishment. The FFORNE Hardwood Co-operative has this high on the agenda and in their business plan, but the high cost and knowledge necessary for investing into long term plantations seems to have resulted in few plantations being established after the project ceased.

13. Project Documentation available:

Most detailed files relating to this project are kept in the Recfind files at the Benalla DPI office. Publications relating to the project include the 1999 survey results, various research reports by CSIRO, CSU, and CFTT. The guidelines for pruning and thinning and the video produced on that subject are also available on request to Philippa Noble at the DPI Wangaratta office, with some available on the DPI website. An evaluation report on the whole project was not undertaken.

14. Issues:

The changing background of landholders in many areas of Victoria, particularly the social “transition” zones and the “amenity” zones has lead to land prices being unrelated to their productive value. The longer term plantation crop is often more suitable to these landholders who do not rely on their land for an immediate income. These landholders are often time poor, both for investigating new projects and for implementing them, so the assistance given by schemes such as this have an greater potential to be popular

with these newer landholders. Cost contributions are more readily accepted by these landholders as long as there are not too many strings attached.

15. Comments/conclusions:

The concept of the project was found to be highly successful in increasing community awareness and participation in sawlog plantation establishment and getting plantations in the ground where economics of the investment is not proven. This concept has since been applied to other projects such as a firewood establishment project in the NE and plantation establishment in the lower rainfall areas of SW of Victoria. The policy section of the DPI is still investigating the concept for its potential use in future projects.

16. Review Methods:

The FFORNE project is a living project, as although the incentive scheme aspect has finished, the ongoing management of the plantations by the growers continues, as well as the information from the research trials. The FFORNE Hardwood co-operative also plays an important role in keeping landholders motivated and investigating options for expansion. Detailed project review has been limited.