

Media Release



FUTURE FARM
INDUSTRIES CRC
PROFITABLE PERENNIALS™ FOR AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPES

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Government urged to show caution when it comes to bio-sequestration

Future Farm Industries CEO Kevin Goss has urged the Australian Government to be very cautious when considering bio-sequestration by plants and soils to reduce atmospheric carbon under a greenhouse gas Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).

Following the release of the final Garnaut Climate Change Review today, Mr Goss has stated that the government needs to follow a conservative and cautious line when framing the policy for bio-sequestration until the role that Australian agriculture will play in the ETS is clearly known.

“We won’t know this until 2013,” Mr Goss said.

“But a lot of thought, research and discussion needs to be had before then, as in many cases there will be only one chance to sequester carbon through plantings and this will require a long-term commitment from rural landholders. Such deals will be difficult to reverse once they have been put in place. There could be serious social and economic ramifications if farmers are locked into contracts that aren’t best for them or Australia’s climate change goals.”

The preliminary modelling on which the Garnaut report depends provides a rough estimate of the potential for carbon farming but has not accounted for opportunities and constraints of individual farm businesses. Farmers would be well advised to assess carefully how this makes best use of their land and to take decisions once the ETS is in place and the carbon and renewable energy prices are known.

This may not be the first time that the potential for tree planting to combat environmental degradation has been wildly over-estimated,” Mr Goss said.

“We also need accurate measures of the amount and stability of bio-sequestration in the landscape, measures that have been validated and are practical to apply. This is an important lesson from the European Union’s experience with an ETS – they have yet to include rural land use change,” Mr Goss said.

“Ongoing research and innovation is critically important as Australian agriculture prepares for a Federal Government decision in 2013 on its inclusion in the proposed ETS. Then farmers can determine their strategy for offsetting their own emissions and participating in an economy-wide market.”

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