

Joint Venture Agroforestry Program – the highlights



Profitable and sustainable forestry on farming land is about sound and proven knowledge of species selection, establishment techniques, management, harvesting and marketing.

It was to advance understanding of these issues back in 1993 that Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), Land & Water Australia (LWA) and Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) came together as partners in the Joint Venture Agroforestry Program (JVAP).

Fifteen years on, JVAP has concluded its final phase of research. The benefits from \$29 million of partner investment, along with an equivalent amount leveraged from research providers such as the CRC Salinity and FFI CRC, has recently been captured in a synthesis report prepared by John Powell, previously the FFI CRC Extension and Adoption Manager.

The result is a publication highlighting the broad scope and achievements of JVAP, the significance of the knowledge being generated by JVAP at the time, and its relevance to today's issues.

The report also proposes priority areas for a future program on woody crops, responding to the significant changes that have occurred

during recent years and those likely to lie ahead.

A new era dawns

Woody crops have unprecedented potential to address many economic, environmental and social imperatives confronting Australian producers and society at-large. Producers in particular seek credible strategies that collectively respond to the challenges of income diversification, carbon markets, climate variability, drought preparedness, sustainable farming and environmental stewardship.

Future broadacre agricultural landscapes can produce this mix of private and public benefits through integrating traditional farming systems with crops of trees and shrubs – a synergy between alternative land uses rather than competition.

The research and policy communities increasingly recognise that woody crops are a vital part of future farming systems, and have signalled the need for change, underpinned by targeted and specialised research, development and extension.

> Fifteen years of the *Joint Venture Agroforestry Program – foundation research for Australia's tree crop revolution* (by John Powell) and the *Prospectus Woody Crops on Farms – integrating trees and shrubs in broadacre farms for multiple benefits* are available on the RIRDC website at www.rirdc.gov.au > Farm Forestry

Already several partners, including the FFI CRC have committed one year's worth of funding or in-kind support for the development of a prospective new program, *Woody Crops on Farms*. This developmental year (2009-2010) will:

- Bring partners and potential investors together to reach agreement on and commitment to a new program's scope, priorities, resourcing and management arrangements
- Enable consultation processes that meet the requirements of individual organisations
- Align with the strategic planning processes of partner organisations
- Provide sufficient lead time for allocating funds
- Maintain the momentum generated by 15-years of JVAP investment. ↘

More information

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FloraSearch firms industry potential of woody crops

The final report on the *FloraSearch* project, a study of southern Australia's vast array of woody plants, details significant opportunity for woody crop production in the lower-rainfall regions of southern Australia.



Given the likely impacts of climate change, the search for biofuels and the carbon economy, this research is of great importance and is likely to trigger further research and development on new production systems to meet future industry requirements.

This collaboration between the Joint Venture Agroforestry Program (JVAP) and the former CRC Salinity and more recently the FFI CRC, has systematically advanced the prospects of native plants becoming commercially viable woody crops for southern Australia's agricultural regions.

In seven major reports, *FloraSearch* focussed on selecting and developing new woody crop species to supply feedstock for large-scale markets including wood products, renewable energy, carbon sequestration and fodder.

The final *FloraSearch* report investigates the markets, economic drivers and spatial influences on developing commercial woody biomass crops in the lower rainfall regions of southern Australia. It does this through surveillance of new markets and industries, detailed studies of production system economics and spatial modelling and analysis for a range of industries and regions.

As an example, the report explores bioenergy opportunities for electricity generation and creation of liquid biofuels to replace

fossil fuel consumption in Australia. A spatio-economic analysis for a case study in the upper south-east of South Australia identifies a region with significant potential for a wide range of woody crop industry types and investigates their feasibility at high spatial resolution.

Overall, this research provides a solid base for development of several Australian species for woody crop production in the lower-rainfall regions of southern Australia. The successful development of these new crop species can greatly diversify and improve agricultural land use without trading off food or fibre production. ↘

More information

All *FloraSearch* reports are available on the RIRDC website www.rirdc.gov.au